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APOLOGIA

AN EXPLANATION AND DEFENCE

BY

EDWIN A. ABBOTT

AUTHOR OF "SILANUS THE CHRISTIAN"

PAUL. Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision...testifying...how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

FESTUS (*in a loud voice*). Paul, thou art mad. Thy much learning doth turn thee to madness.

PAUL. I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but speak forth words of truth and soberness.....King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?

Acts of the Apostles xxvi. 19—27.

LONDON

Adam and Charles Black

1907

Cambridge:

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TO
ISAIAH AND PAUL
"FORMED FROM THE WOMB" AND "APPOINTED"
TO SEE "THE KING" AND "THE RIGHTEOUS ONE"
IN VISIONS
THE MORE REAL BECAUSE SUPERNATURAL
BEING ABOVE THE PERCEPTIONS OF FLESHLY NATURE
AND THE MORE DIVINE BECAUSE NATURAL
BEING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPIRITUAL NATURE
WHEREIN MAN IS MOST LIKE GOD

SUPPLEMENT TO DEDICATION.

"More than forty years had elapsed since Fox had begun to see visions¹ and to cast out devils. He was then a youth of pure morals and grave deportment, with a perverse temper, with the education of a labouring man, and with an intellect in the most unhappy of all states, that is to say, too much disordered for liberty, and not sufficiently disordered for Bedlam." Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. II. p. 251.

"The Lord shewed me, that the natures of those things which were hurtful without, were within in the hearts and minds of wicked men. The natures of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt, Pharaoh, Cain, Ishmael, Esau, etc. The natures of these I saw within, though people had been looking without. I cried to the Lord, saying, 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?' And the Lord answered, 'It was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions?' In this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.

"As I was walking by the steeple-house side in the town of Mansfield, the Lord said unto me, 'That which people trample upon must be thy food.' And as the Lord spake he opened to me, that people and professors trampled upon the life, even the life of Christ was trampled upon; they fed upon words, and fed one another with words; but trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God, which blood was my life: and they lived in their airy notions, talking of him....

"I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infiniteness of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words. For I had been brought through the very ocean of darkness and death, and through and over the power of Satan, by the eternal glorious power of Christ; even through that darkness was I brought which covered over all the world, which chained down all, and shut up all in the death....

"And I saw the harvest white, and the seed of God lying thick in the ground, as ever did wheat that was sown outwardly, and none to gather it; for this I mourned with tears....

"I saw that there was a great crack to go throughout the earth, and a great smoke to go as the crack went, and that after the crack there should be a great shaking. This was the earth in people's hearts, which was to be shaken before the seed of God was raised out of the earth."

George Fox's *Journal*, ed. 1765, pp. 12—13.

¹ Macaulay adds in a footnote, "For a specimen of his visions, see his *Journal* p. 13" (fol. ed. 1765). This includes only the last three above-quoted paragraphs. I add two earlier ones from p. 12, for better comprehension of the vision of "the very ocean of darkness and death" on p. 13.

For remarks on this Supplement and on its relation to the Dedication, see below pp. 80 foll.

PREFACE

THE present work came to be written in the fulfilment of a promise to publish some Notes on the text of *Silanus the Christian*. There were three objects in view. The first was easy and brief—to give, and explain, the contexts of any quotations (especially from Epictetus) that required explanation. The second was less easy, less brief, and more technical—to prove the truth of statements about the New Testament by appeal to the most ancient authorities. The third was to set forth the motives and assumptions underlying *Silanus*, and to shew their reasonableness. This was difficult to combine with the other two. For it involved argument, explanation, and illustration, in a style different from that of technical and critical Notes.

Further, it had been my intention to make the Notes a link between preceding and forthcoming parts of *Diatessarica*, and, for that purpose, to append a reprint of the Indices of Parts III—VI of *Diatessarica*, adding newly-made Indices of Parts I and II. When, however, the reprint and the additions were completed, it appeared that these (amplified by the Index of Part VII) would run to a good deal more than a hundred pages. Those who might care for such a work seemed likely to prefer to have it separately. So I decided to publish that by itself under the title *Indices to Diatessarica*.

Then, reviewing (as they passed through the press) the

PREFACE

earlier parts of the proposed composite work, I discovered that, in the attempt to illustrate the gospels in which the young Silanus found so many difficulties, the *Notes on Silanus* had expanded to such an extent that not a twentieth part could now be properly so entitled. They had become now, in effect, notes on points of interest to students of the New Testament—some of them (as for example, the note on the Date of the Apocalypse, and the Dissertation on “The Son of Man”) amounting almost to separate treatises. The promised “Notes on *Silanus*,” properly so called, were still there; but to have called them by that name would have been quite misleading. Their right title now was undoubtedly *Notes on New Testament Criticism*.

Lastly, going back to the introductory portion of the proposed composite volume, I found that this, too, required reconsideration. My attempts to remove what appeared to me misunderstandings had caused it to grow far beyond its intended dimensions. It had also become, to a greater degree than I had anticipated, descriptive of the author’s individual and personal convictions and developments—interesting possibly to some, but not to the same class of readers that would desire, for example, to study consecutive extracts setting forth the views of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, on the meaning of “The Son of Man.” So I resorted once more to disintegration, deciding to publish the Introduction as a separate volume, before the other two. Being of the nature of an explanation and defence, it seemed aptly and briefly describable as *Apologia*.

As to the *Notes on New Testament Criticism*, and the *Indices to Diatessarica*—both of which I hope to publish in the course of this year (1907)—I will reserve further comment for their several prefaces, merely remarking that the *Notes* will constitute Part VII of *Diatessarica* (2800—2999).

PREFACE

As to the present work, and its attitude towards ordinary views of Christianity, I would refer the reader to chapters X—XII addressed to "A friend" and to "Friendly reviewers," and would gladly avoid further prefatory remark, but for the fact that one very serious misunderstanding, unmentioned in those chapters, has just come into my mind, occurring in a particularly kindly review, and indicating that the writer thought me to be more in agreement than I really am with ordinary views about miracles. On this point I thought I had been already clear. At all events I will try to be clear now.

"Dr Abbott"—says the *Westminster Gazette*—"rather unfairly to himself, throws in our faces, in the very first sentence of his preface, his early disbelief in the miraculous element in the Bible; but he knows as well as anyone that, whatever may be the precise truth about the details, an honest and an admiring belief in the reality of miracles, mostly of a simple kind, was an effective element in religion in the period of which he treats."

The precise way in which two educated Roman gentlemen, such as Scaurus and Silanus, would have regarded some of the miracles of the New Testament—for example, the withering of the fig-tree and the drowning of the swine—I will not now discuss. On that point I will merely venture to express my opinion that some educated critics of those days—though not quite up to the Thucydidean level, illustrated by the great historian's comment on the popular readiness to read a prophetic *limos* as *loimos*—may not have been so inferior as is commonly supposed, to some modern educated critics, in keenness of insight, good sense, allowance for exaggerations, and love of truth.

But on this point I may be wrong. On my next point I am certainly not wrong, for it concerns my own convictions. In saying that I have acted "unfairly" to myself, because

PREFACE

I have given prominence to my "early disbelief in the miraculous element of the Bible," the reviewer seems to think that I have given up this "early disbelief," and that I have been "unfair" to myself in mentioning it. That is not the case. So far from giving up that early disbelief, I feel it more strongly than ever, only with a correspondingly increased strength of belief that Christ is still divine, still the incarnate Son of God, still the just object of Christian worship along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Philochristus (1878) and *Onesimus* (1882) were both written under the influence of the conviction that a belief in miracles ought not to be regarded as necessary for the worship of Christ. *Silanus* (1906) was written after much longer and closer study of the facts, under a much stronger conviction that a time is at hand when well-educated students of the New Testament will find it easier to worship Christ without miracles than with them.

This particular critic, then, accuses me, so to speak, of believing more than I profess to believe. Others have taken an opposite view. Finding that I have given up faith in Biblical miracles, they seem to me to have inferred that I am deficient in faith generally, and that I believe much less than they do in the divine government of the world. So far as I can judge, the contrary is the fact.

And indeed why should not the contrary be the fact? Because a man gives up faith in the Ptolemaic astronomy and takes up faith in the Newtonian astronomy, does he necessarily cease to believe that a great God and a wise God ordained and sustains the motions of the heavenly hosts? When he casts aside the crystal spheres and other clumsy materialistic machinery by which the primitive astronomers sought to explain the ways of God to men, does he consequently dispense with God Himself?

PREFACE

At all events in my own case the interpretation of the Scriptures on what may be called the Newtonian as distinct from the Ptolemaic principle has led me on to feel about them—with a feeling infinitely deeper than in my youth and early manhood—what the Psalmist expressed about the Book of the World, “Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.” Each year strengthens my conviction that the universe, human and non-human, is much more wonderfully made than any human mind has as yet conceived; that materialistic science has not made, and never will make, a hair’s breadth of progress towards the knowledge of the Primæval Cause or Ultimate Goal—*except so far as it has helped to suggest new analogies, and to rise from new material discoveries to new spiritual thoughts.* Now, as before, only more clearly than before, I realise that our one clue to the truth, and our one hope of the highest good, must be found in the Word that “was in the beginning and was with God and was God.”

But this kind of faith—which some may call excessive or fanatical—finding its scope in a spiritual world, is quite compatible with a strict and stern scepticism as to such material facts as are determinable by experiment and evidence in accordance with scientific methods. In these days, with our increased means of ascertaining historical and scientific truth, the highest faith appears to me to demand, from all serious and honest students of the Bible, a sober and resolute incredulity as to all alleged occurrences that cannot stand historical and scientific tests. Those who are not true to the lower truth in the visible and transient world of fact and flesh will find it increasingly difficult—dragged down by the weight of honest doubts not quite honestly suppressed—to rise to the higher truth in the invisible and eternal world of thought and spirit.

PREFACE

It is a desire to be, at all hazards, clear, that has in part dictated the Dedication of this work. Some may be offended at it, and put the book down. If so, it will have served, at least, one of its purposes. For it was intended, not indeed to offend anyone but to deter some from reading further—to deter all, in fact, who feel that they can never accept the author's fundamental axiom; which is, that although the visible heaven and earth will ultimately pass away, there are certain "words," thoughts, and (so to speak) invisible visions, spiritual visions, that "will never pass away." The things that are materially seen are temporal, but the things that are not materially seen are eternal. On this assumption—for, logically speaking, it is an assumption, capable indeed of being imparted, but not of being demonstrated by verbal logic or scientific experiment—all the writer's work is based. Take this basis away and he has no hope for himself and no hope that he could honestly try to impart to others.

Is this clear? "Yes," I think, will be the answer of those who will take the trouble to distinguish between a "vision" and "that which is visionary." They may indeed ask for a criterion to distinguish true visions from false (a question that I cannot touch on here¹); they may also deny (as I too

¹ See *Essays for the Times*, No. 15, *Revelation by Visions and Voices*, price 6d, London, Francis Griffiths, pp. 25—33, where I have reminded the reader that it is not Shakespeare but Theseus, who classes together the visions of the poet, the maniac, and the lover. So, of course, it may be said on the other side that it is not Shakespeare but Hippolyta, who replies:—

"All the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable."

It seems to me that Shakespeare is on the side of the poets. Like Horace, he "laughs and speaks the truth" through a woman's lips.

PREFACE

should deny) that visions alone could supply the basis for a permanent religion; they may assert (what I should dispute) that Christendom will cease to be Christian if it ever gives up its belief in Christ's tangible resurrection; but they will not say—after the explanation given above—that the author, in putting such a dedication on the first page of his book, “acts rather unfairly to himself.” Much rather they will recognise that in thus emphasizing the importance he attaches to visions he is dealing fairly with all concerned, guarding the reader from misunderstanding and the writer from being misunderstood.

My thanks are due to several friends for corrections and suggestions. The Rev. J. Hunter Smith, formerly a colleague of mine at King Edward's School Birmingham, has sent me most useful extracts from the works of modern critics, from whose remarks, even where I could not agree with them, I have often derived help as they pointed to sources that I had left untouched. Mr H. Candler, formerly Assistant Master at Uppingham—the “H. C.” to whom *Flatland* was dedicated many years ago—subjected my proofs to a searching exami-

So, in a serious mood, he makes Horatio—perhaps the calmest and most philosophic of all Shakespearian characters, not really surpassed by Brutus—predict, in a subsequently verified prediction, that the spirit of Hamlet's father, dumb to others, “will speak to him.”

I should not hesitate to say that one test of a true vision is the “transfiguring” of the “minds” of those who see it and of those to whom they impart it, and that, judged by this test, Paul's vision of the risen Saviour was “true.”

But, further, believing in the objective existence of the Spirit of Christ after death, and in the existence of spiritual laws in accordance with which He manifested Himself, I should venture to assert that the Spirit of the Saviour would necessarily be “dumb” to Caiaphas and Pilate while making Himself audible to Paul, had he been standing between the two. Caiaphas and Pilate would not have been prepared to see such a vision or hear its voice. Paul had been thus prepared by the aspirations, the efforts, and the errors, of his past life.

PREFACE

nation as the result of which I have made many alterations. Other obligations are acknowledged where they occur. But I should like to add here that the letter commented on in Chapter X was written to me, after an inspection of the proofs of *Silanus*, by my old and valued friend the Rev. J. Llewelyn Davies, D.D., Rector of Kirkby Lonsdale. His letter was all the more useful to me because it frankly expressed dissent from my views; and I owe him all the more thanks because he kindly allowed me to use it, and to mention his name in connexion with it, though it had not been written with any thought of publication.

EDWIN A. ABBOTT.

Wellside

Hampstead

9 March, 1907

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Black Arabic numbers refer to paragraphs in the several volumes of Diatessarica :—

1— 272 = *Clue*.

273— 552 = *Corrections*.

553—1149 = *From Letter to Spirit*.

1150—1435 = *Paradosis*.

1436—1885 = *Johannine Vocabulary*.

1886—2799 = *Johannine Grammar*.

2800—2999 = *Notes on New Testament Criticism* (see Pref. p. viii).

APOLOGIA



CHAPTER I

PREPOSSESSION, OR, THE GOSPELS AS RECORDS OF A LIFE

IN one aspect of the gospels, they may be regarded as attempts to describe the life of one whom almost all Christians regard as divine, and whom most Christians (including the author) regard as divine in the highest sense. How are the records of such a life to be approached so that it may be, I will not say comprehended, but apprehended?

Some may say, "Impartially, on the evidence, and without prepossession, as we should study the biography of Mohammed. Put aside your belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Weigh the narratives, their agreements, their disagreements. Eliminate what is erroneous or improbable. Arrange and explain all that is certain or probable so far as it can be made to fall into one consistent account of a human being. But let there be no prepossession. Dismiss, for the time, your belief in Christ's divinity, and argue about him as dispassionately as if it would make no difference to you whether investigation proved him to be the incarnate Son of God or a Jewish fanatic."

On the other hand, Wordsworth declares that there is a "kind of prepossession" without which "the soul receives

no knowledge that can bring forth good¹." That sounds unscientific. But is it? Is it not a scientific certainty that no child can grow into a man unless he starts in life with a "kind of prepossession" that he must trust to experience, and learn from experience?

The action that pained a child once will, he infers, pain him again, if he repeats the action. Some may call the child's first avoidance of the repetition of a painful action physical or instinctive. But in time, at all events, it becomes inferential. Whence springs the *first inference*? I know no better answer than that which Wordsworth seems to suggest—"from a kind of prepossession." A voice says to the child, "What happened before will happen again," and he is "prepossessed" with a feeling that he must trust the voice. And is it for nothing that, as a general rule, the baby's first "experience," derived from a very limited induction, is that humanity, represented by its mother, is kind—an illusion, no doubt, but an illusion that may guide to truth?

Silanus approaches the gospels with a "prepossession" as to Christ's "constraining love," derived in the first place from the epistles of Paul, who had felt that love, and in the next place from Clemens the Athenian, to whom that love had been imparted. Scaurus approaches the gospels without that prepossession. The contrast between the results of the two methods of approach is intended to shew (among other things) that the gospels do not supply a good Christian initiation except in the hands of those teachers who have felt the love of Christ.

¹ *The Prelude*, Book viii. Elsewhere (Book xiv) he describes the soul as rising "up to the height of *feeling intellect*" and says:—

"This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood."

But this "prepossession" of Silanus is really an inference drawn from facts. When an astronomer sees a planet deviating from its ordinary course or rate of motion, he infers a force that causes the deviation. Then he forms a working hypothesis about this force. On the basis of his hypothesis he makes further observations and calculations with the view of finding the exact cause—an unknown planet perhaps—that may explain all the phenomena.

Somewhat similar is the course taken by Silanus, when he attempts to explain the success of what a Roman would call "the Christian superstition." He sees Saul the persecutor become Paul the missionary, ranging Asia and Europe as a spiritual conqueror, and subjecting the souls of men to the same Christ that had made his soul subject. Paul, he finds, speaks of Christ's "constraining love." This "prepossesses" him to believe that Jesus must have had a marvellous if not unique personality. The vague stories about the first of the Cæsars, appearing after death to his assassins and turning their swords against themselves, sink into nothing (so Silanus argues) in comparison with this subjugation of Paul, and (through Paul) of so many multitudes of Gentiles, by Jesus the Jew. This feeling "possesses" him "before" he reads the gospels. Etymologically regarded, it may be called "prepossession." But, regarded logically, is it not inference?

Another "prepossession" felt by Silanus is a general belief in the power of goodness, and—even when that belief is temporarily shaken—a belief or feeling that one must side with the good against the evil, even though the evil may conquer: (p. 365) "Rather than submit to the Beast, it is better to be on the conquered side." But this, too, is in part an inference. "There are those," he exclaims, "who will not be the slaves of the Beast—Epictetus, Scaurus, my father, others known to me, multitudes unknown." So far as these rebels against the Beast are merged in the "multitudes

unknown," the speaker is moved by prepossession; but so far as he is influenced by those "known" to him, he is acting from inference, or from inferential feeling, though the feeling may in part go back to so early a period in childhood that it can hardly be distinguished from prepossession.

Apply these considerations to the study of the gospels. The earliest of them, that of Mark, gives us fair warning at the very outset that the writer is not going to tell us a new story. He is going to continue an old one. "As it is written in the prophet Isaiah," he says. Turning to Isaiah, we find that Mark is referring to a "gospel" of Isaiah that promised a forgiveness of sins¹. The same prophet—or perhaps, in view of the plurality of authorship, it would be safer to say the same "book of Isaiah" as it was known to Mark—drew a vivid picture of a Suffering Servant of God who "bore the sins" of his people and "made intercession" for them. When, therefore, the evangelist tells us, a few lines afterwards—without giving us any preparatory information about the nature of the gospel or good news—that almost the first words of Jesus of Nazareth were, "Believe in the gospel," we may be naturally and logically "possessed" with the anticipation—before going further in the biography—that we shall find Jesus connecting His gospel with the forgiveness of sins².

¹ See *Notes*, 2839 *a* foll. The importance of the connexion between Mark and Isaiah is perhaps not sufficiently recognised. A friend, criticizing *Silanus* and expressing a very friendly appreciation of the Epictetian chapters at the beginning of the book, and of the Clementine chapters at the end, writes that he "would like to cut out the chapters about Isaiah." Probably he is right from the artistic point of view. I dare say they are dull. But they are an integral part of *Silanus*, and an important part for anyone desiring to ascertain what the work has to suggest about the origin and scope of the earliest synoptic gospel,—where, by "scope," I mean not only what the earliest evangelist includes, but also (and still more) what he omits because he assumes it to be known, and what he excludes as being out of his province.

² See *Silanus*, pp. 184-5.

But what is forgiveness of sins? Many confuse it with mere remission of penalty. Others, while feeling that it is *something* more, cannot say *what* more. It is, indeed, a very mysterious though (in various degrees) a very common human faculty. In attempts to describe it¹, I have tried to avoid circumscribing it so as to define or limit too precisely the extent to which one human being may have the power of imparting to another an actual lightening or remission of the burden of sin. But this power of forgiving, however indefinable and inexplicable, remains a fact. Those who know nothing about it, know nothing about the chief object of Christ's life. How then can they understand His words or works, if they are totally ignorant of what He is talking about and of the object towards which He is directing His actions?

Again, Mark tells us, and the other evangelists agree with him, that John the Baptist (whom all, Christians and non-Christians alike, recognise as a Jewish prophet and reformer, of great force of character, who largely influenced great multitudes of his countrymen) accepted Christ as his chief. All the evangelists say that this acceptance was before Christ had performed a single "mighty work," and they connect it in various ways with a vision. This leads us back to the visions of ancient Israel—visions of many kinds, but almost all (if they were visions that manifested God) abounding in splendour and glory and for the most part inspiring temporary fear. The new vision revealed the Holy Spirit itself descending on Jesus. It may mean that the Spirit came to make its home in Jesus as a dove in its nest. Or it may mean that John actually saw a visionary dove². In any case the vision appears

¹ *Ib.* pp. 187 foll., 235 foll.

² On the meaning of "actually," applied to the seeing of something visionary, see "*Revelation by Visions and Voices*," price 6d., Griffiths, London. It was originally intended to be a part of *Through Nature to Christ*, which is now out of print. On the Dove, see *Diatessarica* Part III (662-724).

to have inspired no fear. Even a non-Christian biographer of Christ ought to regard this story as important evidence. It bears on the relation between Jesus and one whom most would agree to call the last of the prophets. If we accept it, and if we have any adequate appreciation of John the Baptist himself, it ought to "prepossess" us to find in Jesus one greater than the greatest of the prophets, one who felt His whole life to be inspired continuously by those heavenly influences which His predecessors claimed to receive only in discontinuous revelations.

CHAPTER II

OUGHT PREPOSSESSION TO INCLUDE MIRACLES?

THIS inferential "prepossession," be it noted, relates to spiritual not to material power. The mind looks back to the prophets of Israel promising a future forgiveness, which they could not themselves impart. Then it regards John the Baptist as proclaiming its advent in Jesus. Lastly it is prepossessed with a readiness to believe that Jesus may have felt this power within Himself—this strange faculty of forgiving and of enabling others to forgive. It is divine and may be called supernatural, above our powers. Or it may be called preternatural, beyond our present natural powers and yet not above them. In any case, the power of forgiving sins is not what is commonly called miraculous. Quibble and quarrel as we may about the definitions of "miracle," we all recognise the distinction between the supernatural act of instantaneously withering up sin, and the miraculous act of instantaneously withering up a tree.

It is very easy to be misty about miracles, with a mistiness of speech resulting (it is always to be hoped) from nothing worse than mistiness in thought. I will do my very best to be clear, at all events in speech. Friends, or critics, have asked me why I am so perverse, and obstinate, and "given up to a fixed idea," in rejecting miracles. Do I reject them, they ask, merely as "violations" of the laws of nature or also as "counteractions" of the laws of nature? It is not in either aspect that I reject them. Nor do I profess myself able to "*reject miracles as a whole*" in any aspect.

The use of abstract terms and general propositions, in connexion with miracles, leads, as it seems to me, sometimes to misunderstanding, sometimes to endless and fruitless controversy, and sometimes to a sort of "wriggling," or evasion, that borders on intellectual dishonesty.

For example, when evidence is brought to shew that this or that miracle is a legend—honest, but still a legend, to be explained as a legend and in accordance with our experiences of legendary growth—it is no answer to say that the bringer of this evidence "has a rooted antipathy to miracles"; or that "miracles are not *a priori* impossible"; or—which I have seen in print—"the possibility of Four Dimensions has pulverised the argument against miracles." The question is not one of this kind. It is not of a general nature. Still less is it of a personal nature. The question is as to the nature of the evidence for and against a particular miracle.

To divert attention from this definite issue, by such arguments as these, or by solemnly enunciating the platitude that "After all, you cannot prove *miracles* to be necessarily false," is to be guilty of a very serious offence. You cannot prove *all* "*miracles*," but you can prove *this or that miracle*, to be "*false*." The unwary hearer is sometimes led to believe that, because you cannot prove *all miracles* to be false, therefore you cannot prove *all the miracles in Jonah* to be false, or at least to be no miracles. But you can do this. And you *may* be able to do the same thing about all the miracles in Genesis, and in Exodus, and in Mark, and in Matthew, and so on. If you deliberately deceive your hearer into supposing that what is impossible for *all miracles* is also impossible for *all the miracles in any particular book or books*, you are—a deceiver. If you deceive him ignorantly, then you are guilty of an offence, very small in comparison, but still very gross in a teacher—*ignoratio elenchi*.

But the advocate of miracles may turn round on us and say, "I did not say 'false,' I said '*necessarily* false.'" True. But

what would a jury say to him, in a British law-court, if he, being counsel for an accused man, said, "Gentlemen, the prosecutor cannot prove my client's explanation to be *necessarily* false"? Would not they reply, "What '*necessarily* false' may mean we do not quite see and do not very much care. It is enough for us that it is proved to be '*false*.'" "Necessarily false" is sometimes used, like "necessarily impossible," to mean necessity brought about by the nature of things, or *a priori* necessity. And the platitude, "Miracles cannot be proved to be *necessarily false*" is sometimes intended to express the assertion, "God could work miracles if He liked. You cannot prove that He necessarily cannot or will not." Who dreams of "proving" it? Who but an absolute fool would mention such a proposition in the same breath with "proof"? This use of "necessarily"—how can we describe it except as another instance of *ignoratio* carried to its utmost—*ignoratio clenchi absoluta et perfecta*, not to be excused except in a born Philomythus?

In view of the frequency of this *ignoratio*, it seems safer to say that, after having examined all the "signs," "wonders," "miracles," or "mighty works" mentioned in the Bible, I have been led to the conclusion that some are literally true, but in accordance with what are called laws of nature; others are not literally true, but are metaphorical or poetical traditions erroneously taken as literal; others are visions that have been erroneously taken as non-visionary facts.

Some of these visions appear to me to have been ordained by God—in accordance with laws of the spiritual world of which we have very little knowledge although it both surrounds us and is in us—to give us glimpses of truth beyond the truths of what we call "matter," and to be more real than any of what we call "material" occurrences. As Solidland may be called more "real" than Flatland, so Thoughtland may be found more real than Factland. We really *know* nothing whatever about what is "real." We

have only faith and feeling about it—that kind of faith which bursts out in the words “The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.”

These last considerations may suggest the answer to the question sometimes put to me, “Why do you persist in calling Christ ‘supernatural’ when you really mean that he is ‘natural,’ the son of Joseph and Mary born in a natural way?” My answer is, “I call Him supernatural because many people have such poor, stupid, mean, contemptible, and degraded views of human nature, that, if I called Christ ‘natural,’ I should be deceiving them. I believe all the higher human nature to be in some sense ‘divine,’ having been ‘begotten,’ as the Fourth Gospel says, ‘from God,’ as well as by man, but Christ to be in a special sense divine, being ‘begotten’ not only as the eternal Son ‘in the beginning,’ but also by a unique congenital act on earth, so that whereas in us there is a portion, in Him there was ‘the fulness,’ of the Holy Spirit.”

No doubt, in human nature, the flesh and the spirit are so mysteriously connected that action on the latter acts also on the former. And we may be fairly and scientifically prepossessed with the belief that such a one as Christ may have had a marvellous power of healing the human frame. Even though such acts of healing may have been exaggerated in reporting, so that we have to reject much, we may be reasonably prepared to believe a great deal that would be incredible in the records of an ordinary man.

But still this prepossession concerning the healing of the body ought to be quite subordinate to the prepossession concerning the healing of the soul. And neither of these prepossessions ought to extend to the “mighty works” on which, for many centuries, we have been accustomed to lay stress—such a one for example as the destruction of the swine.

Paley’s *Evidences of Christianity* affords an extreme

instance of this "prepossession" in favour of miracles. He goes so far as to argue that "the story" for which the Christian apostles contended was "a *miraculous* story" on the ground that "they had nothing else to stand upon." As regards the claim to be Messiah, not so much as "a doubt," he says, could have been suggested to the Jews by "a young man calling himself the Son of God, gathering a crowd about him, and delivering to them lectures of morality¹."

Surely this is a narrow view of an immense subject. No doubt, Christ's wonderful acts of healing helped to call the attention of the Jews to Christ's words and spiritual works. But in this passage, and throughout the whole of his treatise, Paley appears to ignore the marvellous powers possessed by a few men, makers of nations or founders of religions, creators (in some form) of new communities, who have appealed, not to miracles nor to the sense of profit, but to what they deemed to be the truth. Even in our modern experience we are often forced to exclaim, "O, the difference between man and man!" And if these differences exist "between man and man," how much greater a difference might be expected (quite apart from miracles) in the Man in whom dwelt the Divine Fulness!

In *Silanus*, even an unbeliever like Scaurus is represented as recognising a marked distinction between Christ and the Greek "lecturers" or "philosophers." Scaurus perceives how efficacious (quite apart from miracles) was that personal and spiritual power by which Christ converted Saul; and Saul, now Paul, converted an appreciable part of the civilised world. To

¹ *Evidences of Christianity*, Part I, chap. vi. He adds, "I mean, no such doubt could exist when they had the whole case put before them, when they saw him put to death for his officiousness, *and when by his death the evidence concerning him was closed.*" I do not understand the final words, which I have italicised. I should have thought "the evidence" was not "closed"—nor regarded by Saul, the unbeliever, as "closed"—by Christ's death. So far as regards Saul at all events, we might almost say that "the evidence" *began* after Christ's death.

thrust upon Christian believers the dilemma, "Worship Christ as miraculous, or else treat him as a mere 'lecturer of morality,'" appears to me an error of Paley's, in part resulting from his environment. With "lecturers" he was familiar. His studies perhaps had not drawn him towards great prophets and spiritual movers of mankind. Hence he may have underrated the power of the spirit. Just so a child might disbelieve in Robinson Crusoe's description of a wave "as high as a great hill," because his own experiences of water had been limited to the area of a washing-basin or a tub. We cannot study Christ scientifically unless we approach the subject with a prepossession as to the greatness of "the Son of man," that is to say, potential humanity.

But spiritual greatness and material greatness, spiritual power and material power, Thoughtland and Factland, must be kept entirely distinct¹. To say that Christ towered above His apostles, and gave the Bread of Life to Thomas, is true. But assertions such as those in the *Acts of John*, that the disciples saw "His feet whiter than any snow, so that the ground there was lighted up by His feet, and His head reaching unto the heaven," and again, "Oftentimes He appeared to me a small man and uncomely and then again as one reaching to heaven," and again, "If at any time He were bidden by one of the Pharisees and went to the bidding, we went with Him: and there was set before each one [of the

¹ Comp. *Flatland* (now out of print) 2nd. ed. p. xiv, where the author expresses the hope "that, taken as a whole, his work may prove suggestive, as well as amusing, to those Spacelanders of moderate and modest minds who—speaking of that which is of the highest importance but *lies beyond experience*—decline to say on the one hand 'This can never be,' and on the other hand, 'It must needs be precisely thus, and we know all about it.'" I italicise "*lies beyond experience*." For these words were never intended to suggest that alleged historical facts belong to the province that "*lies beyond experience*." The phrase referred to the ultimate cause of things.

guests] a loaf of bread by the host, and He also with us received a loaf. And He would bless His own and divide it amongst us; and from that little each of us was filled and our own loaves were saved whole, so that they who bade Him were amazed¹—these must be rejected as false. Why? On *a priori* grounds? No, but for three reasons. First, there is no sufficient evidence to prove the alleged fact. Secondly, if the alleged fact had been fact, Christ's biographers would almost certainly have mentioned it. Thirdly, we can shew how the writer came to believe in his stories and to allege non-fact as fact.

¹ See *Acts of John*, ch. 2-8. Of course some may reject these tales as deliberate fictions. I do not. Having regard to their nature, and to their very early date, I think they arose in a natural way from metaphor misunderstood.

CHAPTER III

THE GOSPELS AS RECORDS OF CIRCUMSTANCES

IT is not always easy to distinguish the personal aspect of the gospels from the impersonal; the records of the Man from the records of His circumstances. Under the former we may consider such words as those to the paralytic, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and the act of healing that followed the command, "Arise and walk." Under the latter we may consider the statement that, after Christ's death, the stone was rolled away from His sepulchre.

But the two aspects run into one another. Whether the stone was rolled away "by an angel," or by Christ Himself, does not seem to make much difference, when we are confronted with an appeal to that "kind of prepossession" which Wordsworth justifies. "Surely in this case, if ever," so it may be argued, "God might be expected, as St Peter says, to have 'loosed the pangs of death,' and to have 'raised up' Jesus, because 'it was not possible that He should be holden by it!'" Is not this something more than a mere question of fact? Do not 'motive' and 'character'—the 'motive,' so to speak, and the 'character' of God Himself—intervene in a question of this kind?"

I think they do. The "prepossession" implied by St Peter in the words, "It was not possible that He should

¹ Acts ii. 24.

be holden by it," seems to me, in Wordsworth's sense, and in the highest sense, most "reasonable." But that does not imply acceptance of it as a materialistic statement. Those who are forced to reject the legends of the ascension of Enoch and Elijah, will find in the Old Testament no justification at all, not even from an induction of two instances, for antecedently supposing that the Father, for the sake of His incarnate Son, would roll away a material stone from a material grave. On the other hand, they may see reason for supposing that His Son would be spiritually raised up and would begin, after His death, to reign with a new power in the hearts of His disciples. That this spiritual resurrection should be attested by visions and voices, may seem to them reasonable and natural. They may regard it as a scientific deduction from the history of visions and voices, which even an atheist must admit to have been very powerful instruments in moulding mankind. The difference between the scientific atheist and the scientific Christian is, that the former probably thinks all the visions recorded in literature, including Isaiah's vision and the manifestations of the risen Saviour—however much they have influenced mankind—mere rubbish. The latter does not.

So far as concerns Christians, then, and their discussions among themselves, it appears that the prepossession in favour of what may be called a tangible resurrection is met by another prepossession in favour of a spiritual resurrection. If it be urged that God would not have allowed Christian believers to entertain for so many centuries the former belief unless it had been true, the reply is obvious, that He has allowed mankind to remain for a much larger number of centuries under illusions as to the nature and motions of some of His noblest works, the glorious hosts of heaven, and that His almost invariable method of teaching seems to be of the same kind. As He leads His children through much tribulation into the Kingdom of Righteousness, so does He lead

them through the labyrinth of much illusion into His Temple of Truth.

For Christian students, the result is that, in deciding between a tangible and an intangible resurrection, we are thrown back upon the verbal and historical evidence. That there was *some* real resurrection we all agree. Of what kind it was, we may not feel certain. But we must decide from the records, not forgetting those that come from *the one witness who, writing before all the rest and speaking in his own person, is able to say "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord¹?"* The same witness says, "He appeared to Cephas" and "last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also²," as though there were no difference, *in kind*, between the "appearances"—only a difference of time. We must also closely examine the very numerous and remarkable variations in the later accounts, contained in our gospels, and endeavour to explain their origin.

In *Silanus*, it is maintained that these variations can all be explained as the honest but erroneous results of a tendency to interpret spiritual language and metaphor in a literal and materialistic manner—a tendency that has affected large portions of the gospels. Let me here call attention to a special instance of such apparent misunderstanding, which seems to deserve more notice than it has hitherto received from modern commentators. Matthew—alone among the evangelists—alleges that Christ said to the Twelve, "*Raise the dead*." Chrysostom and Jerome, with other Fathers and some MSS., omit this precept. Well they may. For Matthew describes the Saviour Himself as "raising the dead" in only one instance, that of Jairus's daughter. Yet here we find our Lord represented as commanding all the apostles to perform this stupendous act!

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

² 1 Cor. xv. 5-8.

³ Mt. x. 8. In the Acts of the Apostles (ix. 41, xx. 10) only one such act is attributed to Peter and one to Paul.

Perhaps the two Fathers above-mentioned omitted the precept, against the evidence of the MSS., simply because they were prepossessed against it as incredible. If so, they were wrong: for its apparent incredibility makes it all the more probable that it was uttered. But were they more wrong than Alford, who prints the text and notes its omission by many good authorities, without a word of comment? It is contended, in *Silanus*, that the precept was uttered by Christ (like many of His other sayings) in a spiritual sense but interpreted by Christians at an early period in a literal sense¹. But if that contention should prove to be true the consequences of its truth would be far-reaching.

¹ See *Silanus*, pp. 337-8, and *Notes on New Testament Criticism*, 2995.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOSPELS AS GRAECO-JEWISH TRADITIONS

UNDER the foregoing title the gospels may be discussed in two ways, first, in their relations with one another, secondly, as parts of a continuous stream of Jewish thought expressed in Greek and influenced by Greek, as regards both thought and language.

On the first point *Diatessarica* has attempted to shew that Matthew and Luke borrow largely from a corrected edition of Mark¹; that in many cases where Luke omits or alters what is in Mark, John intervenes to interpret Mark²; and, generally, that the later evangelists often write with reference, or allusion, to the earlier ones. It has also been incidentally pointed out that Mark is influenced by Isaiah³. But no systematic attempt has been made in *Diatessarica*, so far, to shew how each of our evangelists has been influenced by the ancient traditions of the Hebrews, and by their Greek or Jewish interpreters.

Take, for example, an English Concordance to the Bible, and look down the columns that illustrate the words, "Repent" or "Repentance." In the Old Testament "repent" occurs but seldom. When it does occur, it is more often applied to God than to man. Sometimes God is said to "repent him of the evil⁴." On other occasions, it is said that God "will not spare

¹ See *Corrections of Mark*, 318 (i) foll. and 323.

² See *Johannine Grammar*, Index, "John the Evangelist, intervention of"; comp. *Silanus*, p. 306.

³ See *Corrections of Mark*, 459 (iv) n. 1.

⁴ Jer. xviii. 8.

or repent¹," or that He is "not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent²." When we come to the New Testament instances, we find them much more abundant, but always referring to man, not to God. The usage, however, varies greatly in different books of the New Testament. "Repent" and "repentance" occur about 40 times in the Synoptic gospels and the Acts. The verb occurs a dozen times in Revelation. But neither noun nor verb occurs once in the Johannine gospel or epistles.

First, why is there this difference between the Old Testament and the New? Are we to suppose that human "repentance" was a new doctrine, Christian, not Jewish or Hebrew? In the next place, why do some Christian writers so often use the word while others altogether avoid it?

To the first question the answer is, that no doctrine is more vehemently inculcated by the Hebrew prophets. Only, instead of calling it "repentance," that is to say "recalling with pain"—the word used in the saying "*God* will *not* *repent*"—they use a much nobler phrase, "turning to Jehovah." In describing man's righteous repentance as a kind of "turning," ancient Hebrew almost always inserts "to Jehovah," "from sins," or some modifying clause, for the sake of clearness. Otherwise, "turning" might mean "turning away," "apostasy." But in later Hebrew or Aramaic one of the noun-forms meaning "turning" came to be specially applied to this good kind of turning³; and so, both noun and verb could be used absolutely in a good sense. Hence, if the Baptist, or our

¹ Ezek. xxiv. 14.

² Numb. xxiii. 19, comp. 1 S. xv. 29.

³ Levy *Ch.* ii. 535 *b*, and comp. Deut. xxx. 1-3 "return to the Lord," where Etheridge's translation of the Targum of Palestine thrice uses the noun "repentance" (*i.e.* turning) absolutely.

Is. vi. 10 "turn [again]"—without "to the Lord"—is exceptional and is made clear by "and be healed," which follows. The only certain instance in LXX (Is. xlvi. 8 being a doubtful conflate) in which μετανοεῖν is represented by Heb. "turn" is in Sir. xlviii. 15 "for all this the people *turned* not, and ceased not from their sins."

Lord, cried to people, "Turn!" all their hearers would know that the meaning was "Turn to the Lord!"

But the question would arise, after our Lord's death, how this "*turning*" should be expressed in Greek. Should it be rendered still by the same word as in the phrase "*turn* to the Lord," though the omission of the words "to the Lord" made the verb now ambiguous? Luke does this once in the words, "But thou when once *thou hast turned* (i.e. *repented*) strengthen the brethren¹." For the most part, however, he uses the Greek verb and noun signifying "change of mind (*metanoia*)."

There are objections to *metanoia*. In the first place even this is ambiguous, since it may mean change of mind for the worse. Hence it is perhaps that the Pauline epistles, on two of the very few occasions when they use it, insert modifying clauses, "change of mind *with a view to salvation*," "change of mind *with a view to recognition of truth*²." Moreover Epictetus, Plutarch, and Marcus Antoninus, sometimes use the word in a bad sense, of men worrying themselves and constantly *changing their minds*. Even at its best and clearest, it is far indeed below the level of the old warning of the Hebrew prophets, "Turn ye unto the Lord!"

It has been pointed out (p. 6), that in Mark—almost in the first words assigned to our Lord, "Repent and believe in the gospel"—the word "gospel" presupposes a knowledge of Isaiah's "gospel," or "good tidings," announcing the forgiveness of sins. It might also have been added that the word "repent" represents the prophetic "Turn ye to Jehovah!" This "turning" is expressed by the evangelists in various ways. Mark and Luke speak of "receiving the kingdom of God as a little child³." Matthew does not, either in his parallel to Mark or elsewhere. But he has a tradition,

¹ Lk. xxii. 32.

² 2 Cor. vii. 10, 2 Tim. ii. 25.

³ Mk x. 15, Lk. xviii. 17.

peculiar to himself, including the old prophetic word "turn," only with an explanation, "Except ye *turn*, and become as the little children¹." The fourth gospel—besides describing this process as "being born from above"—mentions "coming to the light" and "coming to the Father²." In the same gospel, "If any man is athirst let him come unto me³" may be compared with the tradition peculiar to Matthew, "Come unto me all ye that are wearied⁴."

This is but one of many subjects as to which the differences between the four evangelists may be in part explained by a comparison of all of them with the language of the Old Testament. Why, for example, does the fourth gospel never mention "mercy" while it abounds in mentions of "truth"—a word (in the abstract sense) never used by the Synoptists⁵? Again, why (in the gospels) is "righteousness" almost confined, and the word "perfect" entirely confined, to Matthew? The answers to all these and to many similar questions cannot be obtained without reference to several literary sources.

First must be considered the fountain-head so often mentioned by our Lord as "the Law and the Prophets." Secondly will come Jewish interpretation of the Scriptures, so far as it can be considered as likely to represent Jewish thought of the first century, influencing our Lord Himself and the evangelists after Him. Thirdly we must consider Greek interpretation of Jewish thought as deducible from the LXX, from the second century Greek translators of the Old Testament, and from Christian writers of the first two centuries. Lastly we must consider Greek thought, and Greek idiom—as current among the earliest Greek converts—and

¹ Mt. xviii. 3.

² Jn iii. 3, iii. 21, xiv. 6.

³ Jn vii. 37.

⁴ Mt. xi. 28.

⁵ See *Johannine Vocabulary*, 1727 *m-r*.

the extent to which they would influence evangelists writing for Greek readers.

Something has been done in previous parts of *Diatessarica* to provide materials for studying the gospels in this way, so far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned. But I hope to do more in *The Fourfold Gospel*.

CHAPTER V

THE RELATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE LAW

THE method above described will (I believe) lead students to the conclusion that the purity, and the amplitude, of Christ's spiritual conceptions, have been inadequately recognised from the first, and that the Church is intended to grow into a fuller recognition of them.

In the first place, Christians have not sufficiently recognised the grandeur of the Law on which Christ took His stand. The date of the Law and of its developments, the personality or personalities of the lawgiver or lawgivers, matter little to us as Christians. Enough for us to know that Christ accepted what "Moses" ordained—even when He regarded it as imperfect and as a temporary adaptation for an imperfect people—as coming from God, and as being based on love—love of God and love of man. "The Law of Moses" inculcated care for the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. It extended beyond overt acts. "Coveting" was prohibited. Even the "stranger" was to be "loved." Debts were to be periodically remitted by Israelites to each other, and they were not to be deterred from lending by the "base thought" of imminent remission¹. Some of this may have been unpractical, but it was at all events most kind. The kindness included animals. No beast was to be put to labour

¹ See *Silvanus*, p. 82.

THE RELATION OF THE GOSPEL

on the sabbath. The mother bird in its nest was to be spared¹. The ox was not to be muzzled when treading out the corn.

This last enactment is quoted in the first epistle to the Corinthians with the question "Is it for the oxen that God taketh care?" The apostle must have meant (I think) that when God enjoined kindness to animals, He had it mainly in His mind (if one may so speak) to make men kind to one another. Nevertheless one may reasonably regret that the meaning was thus expressed. The Pauline comment tends to encourage a view—which I think I have seen described as Christian and orthodox—that "animals have no rights"!

Of course, in one sense, men, too, have no permanent "rights." For "rights" may mean such claims as are based on statute law; and the rights that a law of this year confers a law of next year may take away or suspend in emergencies. But the Jewish law at all events, being regarded by Jews as immutable, may be said to confer "rights" on irrational creatures. In the book of Jonah one claim of the city of Nineveh to God's mercy is said to be that it contains "much cattle." Our Lord speaks of the birds of the air as being objects of God's providence, and suggests that the flowers also are included in His care. If indeed canonical law in any Christian Church assumes that "animals" are distinguished from men by having "no rights," may not that Christian canonical law be said to fall below the Law of Moses in respect of kindness?

In the second place, Christians have not recognised the greatness of humanity, as conceived by Christ, in accordance with one of the noblest of the Hebrew Psalms, which, taking for its main subject Man or the Son of Man, declares that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" God has "established strength"; that He has made Man "little lower than

¹ Deut. xxii. 6.

² 1 Cor. ix. 9 quoting Deut. xxv. 4.

³ Jonah iv. 11.

God"; that He has "crowned him with glory and honour" and made the Son of Man to "have dominion" over all His works¹.

In *Silanus*² it is suggested, and an attempt will be made hereafter to confirm the suggestion, that our Lord, when He spoke of having "all authority in heaven and on earth," and of giving power to His disciples to "tread upon serpents and scorpions³," had in view a spiritual domination, which the Psalmist described literally as a power over "the beasts of the field"—which might perhaps be more clearly expressed for modern readers by "wild beasts"—and the whole of the animal world⁴.

According to this view, the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms contained, in some sense, all Christ's teaching. He introduced nothing new when He inculcated the old fundamental enactments, "Love God," "Love your neighbour." Only He brought into the world a new ideal of God, a new ideal of Man or the Son of Man, a new view of "neighbourhood," and a new power of drawing men nearer to God and to one another through Himself and through His disciples. The Psalms speak over and over again of God's "mercy and truth." What the Psalms reiterate in word, that (according to our belief) the gospel of Christ revealed in deed, that is to say, in the life of Christ.

¹ Ps. viii. "Babes and sucklings" must be interpreted in the light of 1 Cor. xiv. 20 "In malice be ye *babes*—but in mind be full-grown men." The different possibilities of rendering the Heb. of R.V. "established strength" do not affect the conclusion that Jesus had this Psalm in view when He spoke of "the Son of Man." See *Notes on N. T. Criticism*, 2998.

² See *Silanus*, pp. 186–7.

³ Mt. xxviii. 18, Lk. x. 19.

⁴ Ps. viii. 7–8. Buhl 93 *a* and Gesen. 961 *a* recognise Ps. viii. 7 as referring to "wild beasts," and the Heb. *behemôth* means "beasts of prey" in Deut. xxviii. 26, Is. xviii. 6 (*bis*), Jer. vii. 33, xv. 3 etc. Comp. 1 S. xvii. 44 "I will give thy flesh unto...(R.V.) *the beasts of the field*." See 2840 *a* and 2998 (xxiii). The Targ. adds to Ps. viii. 8 a mention of "leviathan." The context of the Psalm mentions "sheep and oxen" as distinct from (R.V.) "the beasts of the field."

CHAPTER VI

THE GOSPEL OF "KINDNESS"

BUT it may be objected, "If the Psalms preach the gospel of God's mercy and truth, how is it that the fourth gospel, which you regard as the most spiritual of all, makes no mention of the word 'mercy'?" I should reply, "Because the author of the fourth gospel knew that the Greek translation, '*mercy* and truth,' often followed by our English translators, did not express the Hebrew thought, which is rather '*kindness* and truth.'" There are passages where the rendering "mercy and truth" would be so absurd that even our Revised Version is obliged to resort to "*kindness*," as, for example, where Jacob, on his deathbed, says to his son "Deal *kindly* and truly with me," literally "with kindness and truth¹." But in many places our Version, like the LXX, uses "mercy" where "kindness" would be better. Who would speak of a father as being "merciful" to his children when he tries to make them glad and happy, or of a shepherd as being "merciful" to his flock when he provides for their wants?

¹ Gen. xlvii. 29. "Kind" occurs in the English Concordance only in 2 Chr. x. 7 "If thou [*i.e.* Rehoboam] be kind to this people...", Lk. vi. 35 "He is kind (*χρηστός*) unto the unthankful...", 1 Cor. xiii. 4 "Charity (lit. love) suffereth long and is kind (*χρηστεύεται*)," Eph. iv. 32 "and be ye kind (*χρηστοί*) to one another, tender-hearted." *Χρηστός* implies "good for use," "serviceable," "easy to get on with," "good in social relations." It is a half-way word in Pauline climax, not so strong as *ἀγαθός*, and it hardly expresses the spontaneousness of the English "kind" and the atmosphere of graciousness that surrounds true "kindness."

THE GOSPEL OF "KINDNESS"

The Hebrew word for "kindness," spontaneous affection, *chesed*, is of a very ample meaning, since (like the Latin "pius") it may include (though rarely) affection for God as well as for man. But the English language, too, is fortunate in having such a word as "kind," which implies a "touch of nature," an absence of constraint, a feeling of kinship with those whom one benefits. Still better is "loving-kindness." The Latin "benignus" is also a good word.

But the Greek language is unfortunate. The Greeks could speak of "philanthropy," "mildness," "good will," "thoughtful consideration," "goodness," "worthiness": but "kindness" exactly, in one word, they found it difficult to describe. For the most part, the Greek translators of the Old Testament adopted the word *eleos*, that is, "pity" or "mercy." This has found its way into the English language in the word "alms," a condensed form of "eleemosyné," whence also comes the adjective "eleemosynary."

What a falling off is here from the broad and ancient Hebrew conception of a God whose kindness goes out to all His creatures, the glad as well as the sad! No doubt the Greeks were saved from the logical consequences of the narrower word by reading into it a great deal more than it meant. They felt that receivers of God's *eleos* need not always regard themselves as His "eleemosynary" dependants. So, too, among Latin-speaking people, where *eleos* was rendered by "*misericordia*," many (no doubt) perceived that it meant more than "misery of heart" caused by a neighbour's misery.

In English we were unfortunate, not through wanting the right word but through choosing a wrong one. Our Old Testament translators for the most part—except in the Psalms and one or two of the Prophets—passed by the beautiful word "loving-kindness" and preferred "mercy" to represent the Hebrew *chesed*. "Mercy"—curiously enough—originally meant "pay," and is best illustrated by its derivative,

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or longer form, "*amercement*." If a man had trespassed against his feudal lord, the offender was liable to be fined or amerced. This liability was "*amercement*." The fine was "*mercia*." The lord could remit, or give up, the fine. In other words he could give "*mercy*" to the offender¹. From so low and base an origin has sprung that word of beauty which we now associate with "the gentle dew from heaven" and with the noblest attributes of the ideal king!

Thankful though we may be for a word that has thus sprung up into loveliness from a low and unlovely origin like a rose from the mire, still, "mercy" is not lovely enough. It does not include the conception of God as rejoicing with them that rejoice and as desiring to make all His children joyful. We have lost much from this non-inclusion. History forces us to see, in this western misrepresentation, or under-representation, of eastern thought, one among many causes of spiritual narrowness, corruption, and degeneracy in the churches of Christ. Some have been led by it to regard God as austere. Others—in their hearts, calling Him inconsistent, but with their lips striving to cover their distrust by talking about the inscrutable ways of Providence—have been tempted to suppose that He could deliberately pauperise His children by want of wisdom and of kindness, and then deal out to them doles of relief. Many Christian communities have too often imitated their cold conception of a hard or eleemosynary God. Others have fled from him to a brighter and purer and nobler ideal, the spontaneous, motherly, gracious loving-kindness of the Virgin Mary. This we, Protestants, utterly and justly condemn. "They know not what they worship"—so some of us are inclined to say. But we, Protestants—

¹ See Skeat's *Etymolog. Dict.* "Amerce," quoting *P. Plowman* vi. 40 "And though ye mowe *amercy* hem late [let] *mercy* be taxour," where there appears a play on the words, "Ye might *amerce* them, yet let *Mercy* fix the *amercement*."

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do *we* know what we worship? Do *we* know, all of us, even what worship means, and what alone is worthy of worship?

If we have gone wrong, it may be well for some of us to go back to the teaching of the best of the Rabbis in order to awaken our souls to the spiritual meaning and deep simplicity of the teaching of Christ. "An alms," said Rabbi Eleazar, "is not fully performed except according to the *kindness* therein¹"; and a very ancient saying in the Talmud describes "the performance of kindnesses" as one of the three things on which the universe is built up². In these days when people are trying to build up new forms of society, new organizations of labour, new empires, new leagues for compelling peace, and when there is a growing belief in the domination of bigness, it is well for Christians to remind themselves that all these efforts will be ultimately unavailing except so far as they partake of the essential element of "kindness."

¹ Sukkah 49 *b*. Perhaps "required" should be substituted for "fully performed."

² See Taylor's *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* p. 12. This saying is perhaps (Dalman, *Words of Jesus* p. 163) not so early as has been generally supposed. But it is of great antiquity.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE FOURTH GOSPEL EXPRESSES "KINDNESS"

THE fourth gospel expresses "kindness" in various ways. In the first place the evangelist, speaking either in his own person¹ or in that of Christ, frequently describes God as "loving." The prophets speak of God as loving Israel with the love of husband for wife. John says that God "so loved the world" that He gave His Son to redeem not Israel alone but "the world." But this "love," though we at once perceive its unfathomable depth, is somewhat too awful and solemn a term to suggest the more joyous aspect of "kindness." And, as we have seen above, John never uses the word *eleos*, by which the Septuagint represents the Hebrew "kindness."

Are we then to conclude that he makes no attempt to express that divine duality, so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, of God's "kindness and truth"? It must be admitted that John does not attempt this exactly and literally, for though he mentions both "love" and "truth" separately he never combines them. Yet I venture to suggest that, at the very outset of his gospel, he succeeds in expressing it in an indirect and characteristic way, so as to help Greeks to realise it. Passing over the Greek prosaic and direct attempts to describe "kindness," he rejects *philanthropia*, which might literally express God's "love for human beings," and selects

¹ Jn iii. 16, on which see *Johannine Grammar*, Pref. p. vii-ix, and 2203, shewing that the evangelist, not Christ, is speaking.

charis, that is “grace,” or “gracefulness,” or “graciousness,” or “thanks,” or “favour.” The “three Graces” had been of old associated by the Greeks with the attractiveness of their Goddess of Love. In the Septuagint, *charis* is sometimes similarly used, to denote the “attractiveness” or “charm” (of this or that woman or man) that causes “favour” in the person attracted. More often it is used of the “favour” that is said to be “found” by man in the presence of God; and that is the meaning in which it is used for the first time in the Greek Bible: “Noah found *grace*, or *attractiveness*, in the sight of God¹.” In this sense, Luke may be said in modern English to describe the youth Jesus as “progressing in age and *attractiveness* for God and man²,” and, when Jesus preaches the first sermon, the congregation wonder at “the words of *attractiveness* that proceed from His mouth³.”

But Christian writers began at an early period to employ the word in a much higher sense. It seems to have suggested to them, among other things, that “grace” or “attractiveness” by which the Lord Jesus attracted men to Himself and through Himself to God, “drawing them”—as the fourth gospel says—to the Father, the result being that they were also drawn to one another. This thought suggests to Paul a new form of salutation to place at the beginning of his letters. The “grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” he regards as drawing the disciples into “the love of God” and into “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” Accordingly, as a rule, he begins his letters with the words, “Grace to you.” Peace comes next—“Grace to you and peace.” Then he adds that both of these come “from God our Father⁴.”

¹ Gen. vi. 8.

² Lk. ii. 52.

³ Lk. iv. 22.

⁴ On this matter of epistolary salutations, Greeks were a little particular, some being, we may almost say, faddists. James begins his epistle by bidding his friends “*rejoice*,” *chairein*. This is the good old established

The eastern salutation was "Peace [be] with you." But peace might come from lethargy; or it might imply the peace of this world, that kind of peace of mind which is really a solitude, caused by exterminating the conscience. John, perhaps suggesting this, represents Jesus as saying "Peace I leave you, *my* peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you¹."

Some such feeling as this may have induced the earliest Christian letter-writers to qualify the ordinary Jewish salutation "Peace be unto you!" They said, perhaps, "Yes, peace, but peace of the right kind, peace that comes from the feeling that we are not slaves of God, but friends of God! It must be the 'peace of God².' And in order that we may enter into that peace we must feel that we are in favour with Him—not favourites, but naturally loved by Him and

form, which held its ground in spite of innovations. Euripides (*Med.* 663) makes Ægeus say to Medea, "*Rejoice (chairé)*," and then, "There is no better preface from friend to friend than this." They say the poet was jibing at the demagogue Cleon, who had recently introduced a newfangled term, "I salute you." Plato preferred "Fare well." The pupils of Pythagoras said, "Be in good health." See Dr J. B. Mayor's note on Jas i. 1. Comp. a letter purporting to have been written by Antiochus in which the composer ventures to combine all the above-mentioned three forms, 2 Macc. ix. 19 "To the good Jews, the citizens, much *rejoicing (chairein)* and health and well-faring, from Antiochus, king and governor."

The infinitive occurs in this sense, meaning "Greeting!" thrice in N.T., in the letter (Acts xv. 23) from the Council of Jerusalem to the churches, in the letter (*ib.* xxiii. 26) of Claudius Lysias to Felix, and in the first sentence of the epistle of St James. Possibly, in Acts xv. 23, those who drew up the letter of the Council addressed to Greeks were supposed to follow studiously the old Greek custom; or else Luke may have regarded it as a dignified paraphrase of a less classical phrase in the original. The author of Jas i. 1 may have argued that the same greeting that was used in the letter written (Acts xv. 23) under the presidency of James, ought to be used in a letter supposed to issue from James himself.

¹ Jn xiv. 27.

² Phil. iv. 7, comp. Col. iii. 15 "the peace of Christ."

invited into His household. The Greeks say *chairein*, we will say *charis*. This should be the threshold of our salutation. *Charis* will also remind us of our *eucharist* (which means for us so much more than mere 'favour'). Through this *charis* or grace we pass into peace and the love of God and the concord of the Spirit."

This word *charis*, then, John appears to take and substitute for *eleos*, in rendering the Hebrew thought about "kindness and truth" as being the great twofold revelation of Jehovah typified and promised by the Law but fulfilled in Christ. He does this twice at the outset of his gospel: "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us—full of *grace and truth*...the Law was given through Moses but *the grace [thereof] and the truth [thereof]* came through Jesus Christ." He also suggests a further thought of "grace"—as a spiritual element passing from the fulness of the Son of God to supply the deficiencies of man—by repeating the word in the same passage, "From his fulness did we all receive and *grace for grace*¹."

This is all that can be said here about the Johannine aspect of that fundamental doctrine of "grace" which, in another aspect, is familiar to us in the Pauline epistles. But many more facts might be stated illustrating the difficulties

¹ Jn i. 14-17. It is interesting to note that "beneficence" and "truth" are said in the treatise commonly called "Longinus on the Sublime" (i. 2) to constitute the point of likeness between man and God. This is sometimes quoted as if "Longinus" professed to be the originator of it. But the author writes it as a quotation ("He answered well who declared...") and Prof. W. Rhys Roberts, in his excellent notes, shews (p. 244) that something like this saying was attributed both to Pythagoras and to Demosthenes, using the same words, "to speak truth and to be beneficent (euergetein)." "Beneficence" does not quite express the Hebrew *chesed*, or our "kind"; but John may have been influenced by this Greek tradition as well as by the Hebrew tradition about "kindness and truth." On the meaning of Jn i. 16 "grace for grace," see *Joh. Gram.* 2284-7.

that must have been felt by Greek evangelists in attempting to preserve the pure spirit of Hebrew tradition to which Jesus of Nazareth would have recalled His countrymen. For example, our translators can plead that Aquila is often with them in rendering the Hebrew "kindness" by ἔλεος, that is, "pity" or "mercy." Symmachus on the other hand frequently renders it by "grace." The Hebrew for "stork" was "the kind one"¹; and the book of Jonah, tersely identifying "kindness" with God, declares that the Gentiles have turned to idols and have abandoned "their Kindness," that is, the One God ever ready to be "kind" to those that come to Him². But in the Targums the bird of kindness has acquired a new name, and the words in Jonah are amplified and weakened into "They know not from what place benefits are bestowed on them." The later Targums, as distinct from the earliest, often alter the Hebrew "grace" or "favour" into the Aramaic "compassion"³. We may fairly conclude that Christ laid more stress on God's gift of "joy" than is indicated by our Greek gospels. Not that He taught His disciples to make joy—instead of God's kingdom—their goal, or to shrink from the pains that would beset their path towards God's kingdom. But He taught them also, even when in pain, to rejoice in the joy poured down upon them by "the Kind One" in heaven.

While endeavouring to shew the difficulties with which John had to contend, and the manner in which he contended with them, I do not venture to maintain that "grace" can ever express, for English readers, the Hebrew attribute of God so effectively as "kindness" or "goodness." "Grace" is a word of many beautiful associations—but too refined, or

¹ Levy ii. 87 b.

² Jonah ii. 8 (R.V.) "forsake their own mercy," but see Gesen. 339 a.

³ For this and other details mentioned in this paragraph, see *Notes on New Testament Criticism*, 2840* a foll.

too theological, and in any case too exotic, for our deepest thoughts, to express which we must always have recourse to the language of the home and sometimes of the nursery. But John wrote for the Greeks. And for them it was a great uplifting—from ἔλεος to χάρις¹.

¹ On this point there is a bearing in John's use of the kindred word χαρά "joy." This word was not inserted in *Johannine Vocabulary* because it is used in all the gospels, Mk (1), Mt. (6), Lk. (8), Jn (9). Mk iv. 16, Mt. xiii. 20, Lk. viii. 13 assign it to our Lord in the Parable of the Sower concerning the transient "joy" of those who "have no root"; and that is Mk's only instance. Mt. and Lk., besides using it in narrative, assign it to our Lord, when speaking (Mt. xiii. 20, 44, xxv. 21, 23) in parables, or (Lk. xv. 7, 10) about the "joy in heaven" over repentant sinners. John never uses it in narrative. The Baptist says concerning the Bridegroom's friend, (iii. 29) "He rejoiceth with joy because of the voice of the bridegroom. This therefore my joy is fulfilled," and Jesus says (xv. 11) "that my joy may be in you and your joy may be fulfilled," and similarly in xvi. 20-24 (freq.), xvii. 13. John always uses it to indicate or illustrate the perfected "joy" that springs from a beloved *Person*, without regard to *place*; and that Person gives both χάρις and χαρά.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOSPEL OF "TRUTH"

IT is not enough for a man to be "gracious" or "kind," for kindness is consistent with ignorance and may be extremely harmful. A man's action, to be beneficent, must be "true," and that in a very ample sense—not only true to himself, true to his knowledge of facts so far as they go, but *true to facts in themselves*, so that he may not, for example, give arsenic for sugar.

In the Old Testament, "true" and "truth" frequently occur in connexion with God, and Isaiah calls God "the God of truth¹." In the Synoptic gospels these words are practically wanting². The Synoptists represent our Lord as frequently protesting for the truth of "the Law" as being darkened by the "traditions" of men. But those writers do not represent Him as using the word "truth" itself. He is supposed to assume that "truth" is represented by the Law when the Law is rightly interpreted in accordance with its two fundamental precepts. John accords with this view, but he also enforces and emphasizes it when he represents the Son as saying to the Father, "Thy word is truth³."

There is also wanting in the Synoptic gospels any direct inculcation of truthfulness. Indirectly they teach it under

¹ Is. lxx. 16.

² See *Joh. Voc.* 1727 *d-r*.

³ Jn xvii. 17.

metaphors. The "candle" is given that its light may be diffused. What is "hidden" is hidden only to be "manifested." Men are to be whole-hearted and sincere in serving God, not trying to serve God and Mammon. They are not to be "hypocrites," seeing only what they like to see, with a "beam" in their eye. The "eye" is the source of light, and it is to be "single." But much of this doctrine is not in Mark. Educated Greeks might fairly say that the duty of truthfulness was scarcely to be discerned in the precepts of that gospel. Nor can it be said to be clearly and positively inculcated in the Law¹.

This perhaps is one reason why John, at the outset of his gospel, emphasizes the revelation of "truth." Most appropriately does it go with the revelation of "grace" as though to say, "This grace, or favour, is not favouritism. It is in strict accord with what may be called the law and order of the spiritual world, the law of righteousness, the will of the righteous Father." It is true to Law. Or rather, it is true to God.

John also (alone among the evangelists) uses that longer form of "true" (*ἀληθινός*) which strictly means "genuine," though that is not an adequate rendering. Once he applies this to men, "The *genuine* or *truthful* worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth²." But for the most part he applies it to God and to things divine, as being what they profess to be. This quality may be described as "sincerity." The Latin "*sincerus*" is said to imply (as also

¹ The English Concordance gives "truth" (apart from God) as occurring in the Pentateuch only in Gen. xlii. 16, Exod. xviii. 21, Deut. xiii. 14. Exod. xviii. 21 "Such as fear God, men of truth" is the utterance, not of an Israelite, but of Jethro the father-in-law of Moses. But under the words "lies," "lying," and "false," truth will be perceived to be implied as a duty involved in the service of the God of "kindness and truth."

² Jn iv. 23.

"simplex" does) the notion of "wholeness." In Hebrew, the word is mostly applied to a sacrificial victim, as being "perfect" in all its parts, not maimed or blemished¹. But it is also applied to men. When God says to Abraham, "Walk before me and be thou *perfect*"²—so our Revised Version translates it—the meaning probably is, "Be thou *sincere* and whole-hearted." Abraham had given up the worship of the heavenly bodies in order to worship their Creator. Then the Creator appeared to him saying, in effect, "If thou wilt worship me, the One, be thou, too, one-hearted. Thou canst not serve the Creator and the stars." This probably is also Matthew's meaning in recording the words, "Be ye *perfect* as your Father is *perfect*." That is, "Be true to me and to yourselves, true in singleness of heart and true in singleness of worship. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

An attempt will be made in *The Fourfold Gospel* to explain why Mark and Luke avoided the use of the word "perfect." John did not revive it³. But he inculcates sincerity and truthfulness by his frequent insistence on the genuineness or truthfulness of God, "in" whom His "genuine" worshippers are to abide. He, too, like the Synoptists, lays great stress on the "light"; but, unlike the Synoptists, he connects it with "truth," saying, for example, "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light"⁴.

The old Hebrew phrase describing the mystical emblem

¹ Comp. Plautus *Men.* 11. ii. 16, where the epithet is applied to "sacred pigs," in the sense of "sound." So we speak of a book as "perfect" when no leaf is wanting.

² Gen. xvii. 1.

³ In classical, vernacular, and legal Greek, the word almost always means, as frequently in the Pauline epistles, "full-grown" (applied to a man or woman) or "sound" (applied to an animal). Lightfoot shews (on Phil. iii. 15) that "the epithet seems to have been especially affected by the party" that boasted of being "spiritual," while "regardless of the scruples of others and lax in their own lives."

⁴ Jn iii. 21.

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on the Highpriest's robe, the Urim and Thummim, perhaps illustrates John's language as well as his thought. "Urim" may be rendered "*light*" or "*enlightening*." "Thummim" is rendered by the Septuagint "*truth*"; but Aquila renders it "*perfections*¹." Thus "*light*," "*truth of fact*," and "*truth of purpose*" or "*perfectness*," besides being connected together in some of the most ancient traditions of Israel, are also connected in the fourth gospel.

The time seems to have come for Christians to lay more stress on the importance of "truth" especially in the sense of "truth of fact," which may perhaps be better called "*truth to fact*." "Kindness" is to be modified by "truth," not so as to cease to be "kind," but so as to remain "*true to facts and needs, true to the claims of 'that which is best for all,'*" that is to say, *true to righteousness*. Those in authority must recognise it as a Christian duty to obey "truth" when it warns them that they must "be cruel," as Hamlet says—in cold blood he would perhaps have said "*seem cruel*"—"only to be kind."

¹ Lev. viii. 8.

CHAPTER IX

OBSTACLES TO THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH

TO this conception of a God at once kind and true we cannot easily hold fast if we base it upon beliefs as to which, or as to some of which, a doubt every now and then arises, "But what if it be not true?" For example, some may say, "Christ accepted the Law of Moses as coming from Moses"; others, "Christ quoted the book of Daniel, clearly regarding it as written by Daniel." Then both parties may agree in the conclusion, "If you think He was in error, you must cease to think Him divine." But a great and growing number of worshippers of Christ refuse to accept these conditions. Some may half accept and half reject them. That halting state of mind makes a whole-hearted worship of Christ very difficult.

My own conviction is that it is as irrational, as monstrous, and, I might almost say, as grotesque—with a grotesqueness like the fancies of children about God as a "grown-up," fancies pardonable in children but bordering on impiety if prolonged into manhood by men endowed with the ordinary faculty of ordinary thought—to suppose that Christ knew all about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the book of Daniel, as that He knew all about the Egyptian dynasties, or the lunar theory, or the geological strata of the earth which He Himself (as the Logos not yet incarnate) evolved in accordance with the will of the Eternal Father.

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Again, we have found Paley implying that, if Christ did not work miracles, He was little more than a lecturer on moral philosophy. Now as to some of Christ's miracles doubt is increasing, not on *a priori* grounds, but because, upon examination, one miraculous narrative after the other is found explicable from natural causes. Here, again, a believer may be greatly weakened if he doubts. He may be much stronger if he can believe in Christ as the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, while holding His working of miracles an open question or even altogether rejecting it. And the same conclusion applies to the alleged miraculous character of Christ's birth and resurrection.

But it may be urged—and indeed I have heard it urged—“Did not Christ Himself believe that He could work miracles?” My reply to such a question would be, He did not look at His wonderful works as mere wonders, or—to use the Latin-derived word—mere “miracles.” He looked at them as described in the Fourth Gospel. They were “works prepared” for Him “by the Father,” or “given” to Him by the Father. I have no doubt that Christ believed Joshua to have actually stopped the sun; but I have also no doubt that He knew the act to be, *for Him*, the Son, an impossibility. He told His disciples that if they had faith they could “root up trees” and overthrow “mountains”: but He never dreamed that His words would be taken literally¹. “All things are possible,”

¹ Chrysostom, however, takes them literally in his commentary on Mt. xvii. 20 (Field, Vol. ii. p. 157). His arguments are as follows: (1) “If you ask, ‘On what occasion did they [*i.e.* the apostles] remove a mountain?’ I reply, ‘They did much greater works, by raising up *ten thousand of the dead* (μυρίους νεκρούς),’”—on which “ten thousand” it may be remarked that Luke (Acts ix. 41, xx. 10) mentions only two. Chrysostom proceeds (2) “But *it is said* (λέγονται) that after their time *certain saints*, much their inferiors, actually removed mountains, at the dictation of necessity”—mentioning no names or dates, and throwing the burden of responsibility on “*it is said*.” (3) Then he passes from an irresponsible “it is said” to a “clear” inference, thus, “Hence *it is clear* that *these too*

He said. Yes, but what did He mean by "all things"? He meant the things that are real, eternal, invisible, the things of the spirit and the mind and the soul, the things needed by the rich man "going sorrowfully away" with an uncured spiritual disease within him—never the things of the body except so far as they depend on the things of the soul.

Therefore, when we say to ourselves, "Did not Christ Himself believe that He could perform real miracles?" we ought to remind ourselves that He moved in a higher world of thought than ours and had purer views of what was a "real miracle." To overthrow a tangible mountain was, in the view of Jewish thought, quite possible for an Elijah or Elisha. But might not even a necromancer perform such an act as this, as the magicians of Pharaoh had power to turn their rods into serpents and back again into rods? No doubt Jesus felt that

would have removed [mountains] (καὶ οὗτοι μετέθεσαν ἄν) at the dictation of necessity (καλούσης χρείας)." (4) Then he suggests that no such necessity occurred, "But if at that time (τότε) no such necessity occurred, do not find fault [with them on that account] (μὴ ἐγκάλει)." (5) Then he finds a loophole for the apostles by contradicting a part of the text he has himself quoted ("ye shall say...remove...it shall be removed and nothing shall be impossible (ἀδυνατήσει) for you"), urging that "He Himself did not say, 'Ye shall by all means (? in every case) remove [the mountain]' but 'Ye shall be able to do even this' (ἅλλως δὲ καὶ αὐτοὺς οὐκ εἶπεν ὅτι Μεταστήσετε πάντως, ἀλλ' ὅτι, Δυνήσεσθε καὶ τοῦτο)." Then he points out that (6) "granting they did not remove mountains (εἰ δὲ οὐ μετέστησαν) it was not because they had not the ability but because they had not the desire." He winds up with this conclusion, (7) "But it is likely that this thing has actually been done, and has not been recorded in writing (εἰκὸς δὲ καὶ γεγενῆσθαι τοῦτο καὶ μὴ γεγράφθαι)" supported by a final platitude, (8) "For indeed not all their wonderful works were recorded (οὐδὲ γὰρ πάντα ἃ ἐθαυματούργησαν ἐγράφη)."

I have thought it worth while to quote this passage rather fully partly because it illustrates the great gulf that divides Chrysostom from Origen, partly because it illustrates what I should call a Philomythian method of arguing in behalf of miracles—a method almost as prevalent now, among certain classes of Christians, as in the days of Chrysostom, and very much less pardonable.

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He could do this, if occasion called for it, or rather *if the Father bade Him do it*. But He felt that the Father did not bid Him do it. On the other hand, to overthrow a spiritual mountain, a mountain of sin, that indeed would be a real miracle and an act worthy of God, an act not for time but for eternity. For "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

It was in this sense that He said "All things are possible." But, when it came to the question whether He should be delivered from physical suffering and humiliation and saved by God's act from the enemies approaching in Gethsemane to seize His body, then, after saying "All things are possible," He added "If it be possible." According to a tradition peculiar to Matthew, He declared, even in the moment of arrest, that He could still ask the Father, who would send twelve legions of angels to help Him. A different tradition is related by John. If His kingdom had been derived "from this world," His servants would have "fought" for Him: so He said to Pilate. But His kingdom was "not from this world." There are points of similarity between the two traditions. From one point of view, He could have asked the Father for help and the Father would have denied Him nothing. From another point of view, the Son—with His eyes fixed on Heaven, discerning the Father's will, and seeing the Father's hand pointing to the Cross as the Son's prescribed goal—could not ask for what was not "possible."

"But, in order to establish such a conclusion as this, you have to sweep away a great part of Christ's teaching." Not of Christ's real teaching, and much less than might be supposed of Christ's alleged teaching, as I hope to shew in *The Fourfold Gospel*. Some things in the evangelistic narrative—as for example the story of the withered fig-tree, told by Mark and Matthew alone, and the story of Peter's walking on the water, told by Matthew alone—many will be glad to recognise as allegorical. Christ's comments on the former will have to be

taken as spiritual, and as not quite accurately recorded. This will also apply to the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand told by all the evangelists¹. Perhaps it will appear that the Johannine discourses on the Feeding, though widely different from any Synoptic account, are closer than the latter to the essence of Christ's teaching.

Yet, of course—obvious though these negative conclusions are beginning to appear to a small and growing group of believers, as well as to a great and growing multitude of unbelievers—a long interval must elapse before worshippers of Christ, in any large numbers, will lay aside their belief in His miracles and miraculous nature. And it is good that the interval should be long. A positive change should precede the negative, and we should learn to recognise Christ's invisible miracles before dispensing with the visible ones. Scaurus, speaking hypothetically as an unbeliever, likened the Spirit of Christ to a magnetic power whereby after death He drew His disciples to Himself and towards one another. Christians also assert this. But they add that this "magnetic power" is really a divine love, is indeed the Spirit of God, and that Jesus was God incarnate. Why should a Christian

¹ Christ's own references to the Feeding of the Five Thousand and to that of the Four Thousand (if only we had the earliest text of His comment and the exact historical account of the acts on which He comments) might indicate that He spoke of the "loaves"—as He certainly spoke of the "leaven" and as He habitually spoke of "bread," "wine," "water," "meat" etc.—in a metaphorical sense. It was the disciples that literalised His saying about "leaven." So much is certain. Then (so the context suggests) He may have remonstrated with them by appealing to their own experience as to the "bread," saying, in effect, "When I gave you the Word of God, the Bread from Heaven, that you might distribute it to the multitudes and receive in return the Bread for your own needs—whether it was twelve baskets or seven—do you not know that the question was not of perishable, but of the imperishable and spiritual food? And yet you now misconstrue my words as though I meant literal leaven!" For a discussion of this view, and of the general question, see *The Fourfold Gospel* (Index, "Bread").

accepting this truth, and this addition too, be isolated from those who believe what he does, only basing their belief on conditions about miracles that he is unable to accept?

The great point is that worshippers of Christ, whether they accept or reject the miraculous, should be "perfect," in the sense of being whole-hearted and sincere. In the Old Testament—as has been said above—a "perfect" victim did not mean one that was perfect in beauty of form, colour, strength. It meant "unblemished by defect," "complete so far as to have no part wanting." So in Christians a haunting doubt—not only in those who appear to the world to have no doubt, but even in others, so far as doubt hangs a weight upon their Christian thought and action, making their vision dull and their acts faltering and undecided—is a distinct "blemish." And a "blemished" victim is unfit for sacrifice. What the Apostle says on another subject, bears on this subject, "He that doubts is condemned."

Of course there are "doubts" that a man must "fight"—as when we doubt the existence of goodness anywhere because we doubt it in ourselves, echoing the muttering of Satan, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" and then, "Is there a God worth serving?" Against these we must sometimes contend, and strengthen our faith by conquering them.

But we have no right to expect to conquer if we admit into our faith, as part of it, beliefs as to which we already know enough to be unable to deny that they may be at any moment proved to be false by irresistible historical evidence. These beliefs may be doubts in disguise. Or they may contain germs of doubt—germs that may be quickened into life as parasites that cannot be destroyed without destroying the body on which they prey. In an intellectually dishonest mind, such beliefs are not so deadly; for if a professing believer in Christ really believes in nothing except "authority," it does not matter much whether he believes a few inveracities more

or less. But in a mind of moderate honesty, such beliefs tend to what is called by Isaiah "weak hands and feeble knees."

A Christian ought not to doubt on any matter affecting his allegiance to Christ, any more than he ought to be unkind. His heart and mind should go out in confidence to the kindness and grace and truth of the higher nature of things, making him kind too. Instead of always fearing and fighting fears, he ought to be for the most part growing and exulting in what we may call, with the poets of Israel—but perhaps in a wider sense—"the beauty of our God" and "the beauty of holiness." Unkindness distorts, and caricatures, and destroys all beauty and grace: but doubt, too, blurs, and enfeebles, and ends by destroying everything. "Kindness and this-may-be-true" never made and never will make a convert. "Kindness and this-is-true" will in the end go everywhere and conquer everything. Real "kindness" has in itself something of "grace" and something of "truth." It is in harmony with, and faithful to, the Cosmos, that is to say, the beautiful and loveable order of the universe. There is a modern saying, that we are to live in "the good, the beautiful, and the true." Rightly regarded, this is but an impersonal expression of the doctrine that we are to find our true being in the good Son of God in whom is summed up "grace and truth," as being the "glory of the Only begotten," the supreme revelation of the Fatherhood of God.

CHAPTER X

TO A FRIEND

SHORTLY after writing the foregoing chapters I received a letter from a friend to whom I am indebted for a revision of the proofs of *Silanus*, and for whose sincere and dispassionate judgment I have had from my youth upwards a profound respect. Some extracts from it put the case against my views so clearly, briefly, and forcibly, that they will be of use to those who wish to consider fairly and fully the question of "prepossession" in favour of miracles.

1. After paying a kindly tribute to my "appreciation of Christ's nature and influence," the letter says, "The books which tell of him you leave in a very shattered condition. I am reminded of one of M. Arnold's phrases—that Jesus Christ was 'a head and shoulders above his reporters.' The Gospels become collections of untrustworthy reports, put together by superstitious men wanting in historical sense and spiritual judgment."

I should be sorry to think—and indeed my friend does not say—that I have described Jesus Christ as merely "a head and shoulders above his reporters"; He seems to me to have been mountains high above His "reporters," though placing Himself on their level. Moreover the evangelists (I believe) were not the "reporters"—in the modern sense of the term—but editors or compilers of "reports," compiling long after the date of the things "reported." Hence I should not myself blame

the evangelists—as Scaurus occasionally blames them—for deficiency in historical sense. Neither should I call them “superstitious.” In “spiritual judgment,” I must admit that Mark does seem to me gravely “wanting,” unless he regarded himself as a mere amanuensis. Matthew and Luke (considering the circumstances) I should not call “wanting¹.” But John seems to me inspired with a spiritual judgment that one might almost call (in the spiritual world) miraculous.

2. “We are accustomed,” says my friend, “to this view of the evangelists in those who think of Christ as a ‘mere man’—whom Coleridge calls ‘psilanthropists.’ But when he is recognised as a unique person, the sinless Son of God, and God is assumed to be dispensing ‘visions,’ and moving in the spiritual history of each man, it seems reasonable to believe in more of Divine Providence working in the beginnings of the Kingdom of Christ.” On this subject he adds, “I find it impossible not to think of the New Testament as having come into existence under some special Divine superintendence and being entitled to special reverence and confidence.”

In one sense I agree with a large part of this. I accord to the New Testament a “special reverence” (such as I should accord to no other book) as being the mine from which we must draw forth, with the helps given to us by God, our knowledge of His Son. But when I find—to speak of no other defects—the earliest of the gospels, that of Mark, beginning by quoting “Isaiah” for something that Isaiah has not said, and ending with the words “for they were afraid²,”

¹ To reply more fully it would be necessary to point out that the books commonly called “Matthew” and “Luke” are, probably, of a composite character. Large parts of these gospels I should regard as on the highest level of inspiration.

² Of course it may be said that Mark’s gospel did *not* originally “end” thus. Possibly not. But what then? We are talking about the hypothesis of “special Divine superintendence” over Mark, as part of the New Testament. If the last words—in some respects the most important

without one word to describe Christ's manifestations after death—then my very conviction itself of "some special Divine superintendence" makes it clear to me that God's "superintendence" was of a very different kind from that which has "superintended" the Koran. In the Koran are none of our difficulties. And how easy it would have been for Divine Providence to have "superintended" the New Testament, if not in the way in which it "superintended" the Koran, namely by destroying divergent copies, then in other ways, for example by giving to the world at an early date an authentic account of Christ's words and works, under the sanction of the Council of Jerusalem! That God has not done this I take as proof that He did not intend to do it, and that His not doing it will turn out to be for our good in the end.

In connexion with this hypothesis of a "special Divine superintendence," my friend admits that he is "aware—painfully aware—of the difficulty of defining how much of error such a view allows us to admit in the sacred writings." It is my contention that the time has come when Christians must be no longer harassed and worried and distracted from higher things by being thus "painfully aware" of a "difficulty" that must indeed stare every honest and educated Christian in the face. There are other things that more fitly claim from us a sacrifice of "pain." We have no right to be "pained"—not much at least nor often—about "error" in our gospel or good tidings. We may fairly ask whether God intends us now to be put to the pain of attempting what many of us must feel to be an impossibility. For impossible

words—of the earliest of the Christian gospels were allowed by Providence to be lost, does not the "special superintendence," at least in this particular case, altogether vanish—unless indeed (as I should deem to be *a priori* not improbable) those last words tended to support a spiritual view of the Resurrection, for which the Church was not at that time prepared? On the end of Mark's gospel, see *Notes on New Testament Criticism*, 2924.

it surely is to "define" exactly those limits of "error" which will just allow our faith to find a footing, safe for the present, on the edge of a cliff, below which there is perpetually at work a corroding and encroaching criticism. How great would be the relief of many educated readers of the Bible if they could attain the conviction that "error," as in the Old Testament, so in the New, was subordinated by God, as also He subordinated our errors in the knowledge of His stars, that He might keep us from a false appearance of a complete knowledge—complete knowledge, in this world, being always dead—and that He might lead us through illusion to the truth!

3. In connexion with special Providence my friend says, "As I have often protested to you, I cannot see how a normal son of Joseph and Mary could become, on your non-miraculous hypothesis, the unique sinless Son of God and King of the Kingdom of Heaven." But I do not think I have ever said this. Certainly I never intended to say it, for I do not believe it. My belief is, not that the normal son of Joseph and Mary "*became*," that is (I suppose) *was promoted to be*, the unique sinless Son of God, but that the eternal Son of God descended from heaven (one speaks of "descending," of course, in metaphor) to "*become*" *flesh as the Son of Joseph and Mary*, and then returned to heaven, having been manifested to men as King of its Kingdom. There is a difference (to my mind) between man "becoming" God, and God "becoming" man. The latter represents my belief.

4. The letter continues, "I often wish that our sacred volume had received for its title, 'The Kingdom of Heaven.' The Kingdom is understood and entered into by knowing Christ the King: but then he is to be known *as* the King—not as the most touching and constraining of Teachers, not as the best man that ever lived, but as Lord and Saviour."

All this I heartily accept, except that I should prefer "Lord," as a term higher than "King," endeared and ennobled

by Pauline and Johannine usage, and (in suitable contexts) less likely than "King" to be understood as implying a reign enforced by fear or physical compulsion. I certainly meant to make it clear, by the contrast between Christ and Epictetus, that the former was different *in kind* from the latter, and was superior to "the most touching and constraining of Teachers." In describing Christ as entering into the heart of Saul to reign there, I attempted to suggest that He forced that entrance, not as being merely "the best man that ever lived," but as being the irresistible Lord of human hearts, whom humanity should regard as its only spiritual King.

5. As regards the future my friend says, "I am pretty well convinced that those who worship Christ will continue to accept the Gospels as they have come down to us, and that those for whom the Gospels have no authority....."

I leave this sentence unfinished because, before commenting on what will befall (in my friend's opinion) the second of his two classes, I should like to suggest, about the classes themselves, that he should have recognised more than two. Is there not already a very large class of which it can hardly be said that they "accept the Gospels" exactly "as they have come down to us," while yet it would be unfair to say that the gospels "have no authority for them"? I certainly do not acknowledge myself as one "for whom the Gospels have no authority." They have great authority for me. So, too, have the Psalms and the Prophets. I accept the Old Testament and the New not indeed exactly "as they have come down to us," not without exceptions and reservations, but still so as to admit that they possess a great deal of "authority." In the case of one or two books of the Bible the reservations may be very large indeed. In reading the gospels I make no such serious reservations.

6. And now to come to the conclusion of my friend's last sentence, "Those," he says, "for whom the Gospels have no authority will find themselves unable to worship Christ." These words, as they stand, do not apply to those of my

way of thinking, for whom the Gospels cannot be said to "have no authority." But I will venture to make them apply, by wording his sentence thus, "Those for whom the Gospels have *so little authority that they hack out of them, as you yourself do, every particle of miraculous narrative*, will find themselves unable to worship Christ." This is my rhetoric, but (I think) his meaning.

Well, in the first place, I must repeat that the force of my friend's conviction about the future ought to be weakened when he reflects on the insufficient breadth of his classification of believers and non-believers. He seems to me to ignore those who cannot accept the gospels "as they have come down to us" and yet are prepared to accept them as having *some* authority, and indeed—on spiritual matters—very great authority.

These form a small class, perhaps, but a class worth thinking about. I remember, very many years ago, hearing the Headmaster of an important public school, traditionally connected with the army, deplore the fact that, when the old boys came back on a visit, while those who were in the army stayed to communion, those who went to the university did not. The biography of the late Professor Henry Sidgwick made it painfully apparent that a man of singular candour, disinterestedness, and thoughtfulness, a dispassionate student, trained as a Christian and desiring to remain one, might feel himself cast out from the joy of following Christ by the demands of truth compelling him to reject what appeared to him essential portions of Christ's recognised biographies. It could hardly be said that for Henry Sidgwick the gospels "had no authority." Yet he seems to have doubted whether he had the right to call himself a Christian. *Silanus* was written with such instances in view.

But the most important consideration of all appears to me to be this, that in "hacking out the miraculous element"—which is a rhetorical way of describing the process whereby historical and verbal criticism elicits the real facts that lie

beneath such legends as that of the stopping of the sun and the withering of the fig-tree—the painstaking and reverential student may be in reality “hacking out” a great mass of misunderstanding that has obscured the revelation of the true and spiritual grandeur of Christ, obscuring also the true and spiritual grandeur of humanity, made in the divine image and destined to be conformed to God. In this revelation lies (as it seems to me) the great hope for the future. Thomas of Aquinum is reported to have said, in effect, that the material miracles of the Bible were as nothing compared with the moral miracles wrought by the Spirit of Christ. How true! Nay, when one comes to think seriously and soberly about it, how obvious! Yet how far are we at present from regarding it as obviously, or really, or even conceivably true!

When at last we learn this truth, not by heart but in the heart, all things in the Bible and all things in the world, will, as St Paul says, “become new.” And then all things ought to become to us all the more divinely wonderful for being perceived to be, not (materially) miraculous, but natural.

Surely this change of view is at least conceivable—even to those who crave material miracles. A miraculous Moses, for example, with a wonder-working rod in hand, able to drive back the sea and to draw water from the rock, to bring down bread from the sky and to open a chasm for the swallowing up of rebels in the earth—is he not in truth far less divinely wonderful than the same Moses without all these adjuncts, but with eyes fixed on the one invisible God, moulding a stiff-necked nation into some degree of conformity with what was revealed to him as the will of Jehovah?

If this is already felt to be so by some, as regards the great Lawgiver of Israel after the flesh—even when very large historical deductions are made from the detailed legislature attributed to him—why should not men ultimately come to feel the same thing about the Messiah of Israel after the spirit?

Not that all the historical and literary problems in the gospels seem at present soluble or ever likely to be entirely solved. But we shall be taught, by patient attempts at their solution, to seek, and learn, more and more of the real evangelic mysteries, the mystery of the needs and weaknesses of human nature, the mystery also of its divine greatness and strength, the mystery of the infinite possibility of its conformation to the divine image—if only we will revolt against the Prince of this world, who is always urging us to worship nothing but what is portentous, nothing but what is altogether outside our experience or beyond any prospective faculty or capacity of man. God the Son, incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth, is unique. But He influences us most through the instrument most familiar to us in our ordinary experience—the family. The Father cannot be manifested except through the Son. The Son cannot manifest the Father except by imparting to us that Spirit through which He Himself is in eternal unity with the Father, the Spirit of Love. It is one of the many merits of the Fourth Gospel that, more than the Three, it teaches us to lay stress not on visible “mighty works,” but on “signs” of invisible might; not on one definite place, technically called “heaven,” but on a *home*, wheresoever it may be—perhaps *homes*, “*many mansions*” or “*abiding-places*”—constituted by friendly presences, according to the saying of the Divine Persons (Jn xiv. 23) “We will come unto him and make our *abiding-place* with him¹.”

¹ Comp. *Paradosis* 1393, where it is shewn that *μονή* occurs nowhere else in N. T. except Jn xiv. 2 “In my Father’s house are many *abiding-places*,” and xiv. 23 “We [*i.e.* the Father and the Son] will make our *abiding-place* with him,” *i.e.* with the man that “loves the Son and keeps his word.” The former passage might suggest that the abiding-places are in heaven above; the latter shews that the abiding-place may be in man’s heart below. Comp. xiv. 20 “you in me and I in you,” and many other passages where the evangelist reiterates phrases indicating that the supreme blessedness cannot be described in terms of *place*.

CHAPTER XI

TO A FRIENDLY REVIEWER

ONE of the reviews of *Silanus*¹—evidently written with every desire to be fair, and even (as far as possible) to be sympathetic, and giving among its extracts the two passages that I myself should have selected as likely to convey the most favourable impression of my book—puts me several questions, to which—as similar questions might occur to some of my readers—I will endeavour to reply.

I. The reviewer begins by saying, "What the author preaches is really salvation through emotion. Feeling is the ultimate leader; reason fails as a guide. In illustration, we may at once quote the touching passage from the closing chapter in which Silanus narrates his definite conversion to faith in Christ." He proceeds to quote (p. 366) and I will repeat that part of his extract on which he probably based his condemnation, "It was no act of reason. Nor was it vision. It was more like feeling. The arm of the Lord seemed to lift me up. And thus...at last...I was carried as a little child into the joy of the family of God..." He proceeds, "It seems to us impossible not to feel that"—I italicise—" *Dr Abbott's thesis might be made, as the saying is, to prove*

¹ *The Layman*, 23 Nov. 1906. This journal has not been long in circulation; but its literary reviews, so far as I have seen them, have appeared to me of much more than ordinary merit; and as the writer frankly, and with almost diametrical opposition, dissents from my conclusions, his remarks supply me with a convenient basis for explanations that may at once make my reasons clearer and my conclusions stronger.

too much..." Now comes the first question. "If a Roman Catholic did use some such language to Dr Abbott, would the latter accept the attempted justification as adequate?"

In reply, I ask my questioner two questions, First, Where and what is my "thesis"? Secondly, Is there not some difference between a false "thesis," and a "thesis" that "might be made"—by some people—"to prove too much"?

My thesis is (p. 75) "Follow the *logos*," but "the *logos*, in its fullest sense." Silanus is resolved to try whether the "logos" may not indicate that "*feeling*" as well as "*reason*"—not apart from "*reason*"—may help us towards the knowledge of God. The *logos* must include *pathos*.

If a convert to Roman Catholicism told me that he had been led to the worship of the Virgin by some such force as led Silanus to the worship of Christ—not exactly "*feeling*," but "more like feeling" than like vision—and asked me whether he was not similarly justified, I should reply, "Yes, if you made similar efforts to reach the right goal, but not otherwise. If you resolutely followed the *Logos* in its fullest sense, as he did; if you loved truth as passionately as he did; if you studied the prophets, as he did; if you were absolutely resolved not to be led away by fears about your own soul and by a base and superstitious terror lest God should punish an honest man for inability to believe in assertions about historical facts; if, above all things, you carefully, critically, and reverently, gave the same attention, or even a tenth part of the attention, to the study of Christ and Christ's words as you gave to what others (the Fathers, the commentators, and what you call 'the Church') have taught about Christ; if you have done all this, and yet feel (in consequence of your vision of the Virgin) that you cannot be satisfied with the worship of the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, but must needs worship or adore the Mother too—then by all means go and worship in your own way. It may be a dangerous way. You may be taught to distinguish 'adore' and 'worship'

with your lips but find it hard to do so in your heart. Still, it will be an honest way, and I wish you good speed. It is better heartily to worship, against all history, an ideal Mother, than to pretend to worship a divine Son, who is no divine Son to you, a Son whom you do not love, a Son whom you do not know, a Son who is to you a Machine, a Scheme of Salvation."

If on the other hand the convert were to confess to me that he had not taken the trouble that Silanus took, I should ask him how he could reasonably hope to be similarly justified. "Such 'visions,' " I should say, "or such 'feelings,' or 'quasi-feelings,' are not to be trusted by those who have not proved themselves resolute and fearless seekers after truth." If, further, he confided to me that he was largely influenced by an intense fear for his own soul, and by a haunting suspicion that there was truth in the maxim "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*," and that his whole nature craved the support of an infallible Church—then, I confess, I should feel for him that kind of pity which it is not good to feel, and I should desire to close the conversation.

One last remark to the convert might perhaps suggest itself to me, "What would you do if your infallible Church were to decide that the Virgin was not to be worshipped or adored, and that a return was to be made to the practice of the Churches in the first three centuries?" But I should not utter it, for I should feel that we had too little ground in common for any profitable discussion. To me the craving for an infallible Church is "a dread desire," and I always have in mind Virgil's warning against converting desire into a God—*Sua cuique Deus fit dira cupido*.

To return to my reviewer. I think he has misunderstood my "thesis." I do not "preach salvation through emotion." If I seem to do so in some passages of *Silanus*, it is because I have not expressed myself clearly. At all events I did not intend to do so. Nor do I think I have been proved

to have done so in the passage quoted by the reviewer—if a fair regard is paid to the antecedents of Silanus, and to his resolute determination not to “yield to *self-deceiving*, and call it believing.” My intention was to preach salvation through right action, based on right reason, and influenced by right emotion. My thesis, or rather my precept, is, “Follow the Logos.” But my Logos is the Word of God, and that Word includes reason as well as emotion. A right vision, or right “feeling,” such as Silanus felt, is rarely or never vouchsafed—this at least is my conviction—except through right reason and right emotion, even in the hearts of the most sinful, in the processes leading to their conversion. There are moments, critical moments in a man’s life, when Emotion steps in front, and may seem to act alone; but if she is guiding us rightly, her brother, Reason, has always been quietly preparing the way for his sister, and is close behind ready to second and support her teaching.

2. On the compatibility of spiritual uniqueness with ordinary parentage I may have failed sometimes to make myself clear because I find it difficult to understand the arguments against it. For example my reviewer says that *Silanus* “presents us with a Christ who is no more than an individual among individuals.”

Now I do not understand, 1st, what the writer means by “*individual*” as distinct from “man,” 2nd, what he means by “*among*.” By the latter, he can hardly mean “in the midst of” (as John the Baptist says, “there standeth one *among* you whom ye know not”). I think he means “no more than a man *somewhat above the level of ordinary men, but still to be reckoned among them.*” If so, the writer has failed to understand my position. Even the sceptical Scaurus is represented as admitting that Christ may be as different from other men as steam is from water. The converted Silanus would frankly accept Christ as unique in humanity, the incarnation of the Eternal Son of God.

3. The writer adds, "Apart from the question whether such parentage is consistent with belief in His sinlessness, it is clearly not consistent with belief in His mission as 'Consummator.'" [*Here I may remark that I believe in Christ both as sinless and as "Consummator," but the inconsistency, so far from being "clearly" manifested to me, seems to me non-existent.*]

4. Then he appeals to me with the following questions, "And except He be Consummator, how can He be a full and perfect Redeemer? To the fullness and perfection of Redemption there is necessary the power to infuse fresh moral and spiritual grace. And how can there be such infusion, except there first be a 'Consummator'?" [*Accepting Christ as "Consummator," I accept all the writer's deductions. But I cannot understand why he should suppose that I do not accept them.*] "We would ask Dr Abbott whether he denies that the conception of men as feeding upon the Manhood of Christ is an essential part of the Gospel." [*I do not deny it. I believe it with all my heart.*] "In that case we venture to put it to him that there is no answer to the question 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' except it first be conceded that human life was gathered up into Him." [*I entirely believe—"concede" would not express my feeling—that "human life was gathered up into" Christ, the incarnation of the Eternal Son.*]

5. The writer proceeds to say, "*And with such an ingathering ordinary parentage would be irreconcilable.*" This sentence—which I have italicised—I absolutely fail to understand. Or, if I understand it, I am amazed at it, because it seems to spring from a fundamental disbelief that one born of human parents so as to become a sharer in actual human flesh and blood can be, in the foreordained Providence of God, the Redeemer of mankind, and gather mankind into Himself. But what says the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 14)? "Since the children are *sharers in flesh and blood*, he [the

Eternal Son] also himself *in like manner partook of the same.*" I should have thought that these words, especially with the phrase "*in like manner*"—combined with the general tenor of the Pauline epistles, none of which ever mentions the Virgin birth—decidedly favoured my view. But at all events they seem to me to shew that antecedently it is quite as probable, to say the very least, that in carrying out His divine purpose of sending His Son to redeem mankind, God should use the instrumentality of two human parents, as that he should use the instrumentality of one.

6. I do not think I am doing an injustice to those who insist on the Virgin birth in assuming that most of them would agree with the following advocacy of it by Tertullian (*Marc.* iv. 10, transl. Clark): "He [*i.e.* Christ] cannot be constituted the Son of man unless He be born of a human parent (qui non sit natus ex homine) either father or mother. And then the discussion will turn on the point, of which human parent (cujus hominis) He ought to be accounted the son—of the father or the mother? *Since* (si) *He is* [*begotten*] *of* (ex) *God the Father*, HE IS NOT, OF COURSE, [THE SON] OF A HUMAN FATHER (utique non ex homine). If He is not of a human father (si non et (?) ex homine), it follows that He must be [the son] of a human mother (super est ut ex homine sit matre). If of a human mother, it is evident that she must be a virgin (jam apparet quia ex virgine)¹."

How then does Tertullian meet the flat contradiction of his views contained in Jn i. 13 "*Who were begotten, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh...but of God*"? He meets it (*De Carne Christi* 19) by declaring that the text is corrupt. He asserts that it ought to be read "*Who was begotten.*" Nay, he accuses heretics of having "*tampered with it*" by altering "*was*" into "*were.*" It is impossible, he thinks, that "*were*"

¹ Clark's transl., in "*si non et ex homine*," does not render "*et*," the force of which is not clear to me. "*Si non est ex homine*" [*i.e.* from man as father] would seem to make better sense.

begotten" could be thus used of ordinary men. "How can this be?" he asks. Something like this was said by Nicodemus (Jn iii. 9 "How can these things be?") but the answer was, "Art thou the teacher of Israel and understandest not these things?" Tertullian, on this point, appears to me open to a similar rebuke. His condemnation of the Johannine doctrine seems based on materialism and on degraded views of that union of man and woman which is said by our Lord to have been ordained (Mk x. 6, Mt. xix. 4) "from the beginning¹."

7. On the resurrection of the body my critic says, "If the body of such as Christ was unredeemable, if it was made but to die, then we scarcely require further proof that all material creation is unredeemable, that it is hopelessly corrupt and evil and that it must be left to perish utterly and eternally. In other words, Dr Abbott's theory of the Resurrection appears to lead to Manicheism."

I always thought that Mani believed matter to be evil. Certainly no belief of mine tends that way. Speculations about the ultimate material basis of phenomena seem to me barren, and not to be indulged in except as amusements of an idle hour, like excursions into the Fourth Dimension. But my private fancy is, that there *is* no such thing as matter (though of course physicists may assume it, for a working hypothesis, as Euclid assumes non-existent and non-possible points and straight lines) but only laws of force. However, it is more to the point to avow my profound conviction about the transience of what is visible, in words that my critic will not

¹ In fairness to Tertullian, it should be added that he followed the precedent of Irenæus, who habitually misquotes Jn i. 13 in the same way, applying what John asserted concerning the birth of *all* believers after the *spirit*, to prove the unique birth of Christ after the flesh (see 2998 (xxxvii foll.)). Irenæus, of course, may have followed earlier authorities. If so, the fact would prove a very early corruption indeed of John's doctrine.

dispute, "The things that are [physically] seen are temporal." Christ's "[physically] seen" body, according to my belief, was "temporal." It was intended to live *and* to die—my reviewer's "but" (in "made *but* to die") seems to me an error, even on the supposition that it was "unredeemable"—for the redemption of mankind. As the seed dies and perishes to produce the flower into which it passes, so our bodies die and perish to prepare the way for an abiding personality—clothed in what St Paul calls "a spiritual body," real, eternal, but incapable of being physically seen or touched (see *Notes*, 2824*). And, as it will be with our "flesh and blood," so it seems to me to have been with that of Christ, "*who also himself in like manner partook of the same.*"

8. "Dr Abbott's weakness," says my reviewer, "is that he does not appreciate the significance of the divergence between his picture of the Saviour and that in which the Church of Christ has rejoiced and still does rejoice." For "the Church of Christ," I should like to substitute, "All but an insignificant minority in the Church of Christ." But, passing from that, I can assure my critic that I quite appreciate the great divergence between a Christian faith that cannot dispense with miracles and a Christian faith that can. In the same way I "appreciate the significance of the divergence" of a Christian Church that calls itself infallible from a Christian Church that does not. I appreciate also the difference of the babe-like unmixed "rejoicing" of the members of the former Church from the full-grown, tempered, but perhaps not less deep, "rejoicing," felt by the members of the latter. But the question is, not about my "appreciation," nor about the magnitude of the "divergence," nor about the fulness of "rejoicing," but about the "*picture and its truth.*" I maintain that the old "picture" is false. It was true for me once, subjectively, when I looked through a mist; and it is still true for those who look through the mist. But it is certainly not true now for me and for those

who see the truth as I see it. I also maintain that it is objectively false. Many facts that I used to regard as facts, *e.g.* the withering of the fig-tree, can be proved (I assert) to be *non-facts*.

In any case, *Silanus* was not written for such believers as may feel that they are able to "rejoice" peacefully and safely in a faith that is largely based on the acceptance of miracles. Its main object was to point out to those who doubt, or disbelieve, the miracles of the New Testament, how much they may honestly gain by contemplating a non-miraculous Christ as an object of reasonable worship—not how much comfortable but dishonest peace, or quasi-peace, they may have lost by giving up perforce a profession of belief in alleged events that I myself cannot conscientiously exhort them to accept as history.

Moreover, as I have hinted before, if we are to consider things profitable as well as things true, if we are to aim at "rejoicing" as well as at knowing, there is another side to my critic's view. For I may apply to the miraculous what he applies to the non-miraculous hypothesis. To use his phrase, the former seems to me "a ledge upon which the feet cannot finally rest." The "rejoicing," on such "a ledge," does not appear to me safe.

9. The real "divergence" between the two pictures of the Saviour seems to me to be this. The former, the miraculous one, requires less faith than the latter, the non-miraculous. The former does not so greatly need to be supplemented by faith in the evolution of all things culminating in the evolution of a Son of Man seated at the right hand of God.

The old believer (I mean the Christian to whom what may be called the tangible resurrection of Christ is a necessity) stands with the Book in his hand, or the Church by his side, and—with the aid of Book or Church—looks up at Christ, in His revived body, seated on a throne at the right hand of God. Perhaps I should say "seated," or "standing,"

since Stephen saw Him "standing," and I really do not know the canon of the literalists on this point. Without this revived body my reviewer has no hope of the ultimate redemption of all things. Having it, he has all things and abounds. To strengthen his faith, to help him to grow in the knowledge of the Logos, he has no need of the Cosmos, no need of secular human nature, no need of Shakespeare or Homer, or poetry, or history (apart from what the Book or the Church tells him about it). He has the whole loaf in the Book or the Church. The universe, and universal manhood, may go this way or that. They can teach him nothing new about Christ, and consequently nothing that helps him to salvation.

The new believer feels that he must supplement his knowledge of the Word incarnate as Christ on earth by an ever-growing knowledge of the Word pre-incarnate and post-incarnate—the Word manifested in all His works, but especially in the wonderful development of human nature from sinless animalism through sin to righteousness; and in God's revelations of Himself to man from the first dawn of human consciousness up to the present day¹. He does not condemn

¹ This view was first suggested to me by Darwin's *Origin of Species* and embodied in the first of my *Cambridge Sermons* 1875 (out of print), more fully worked out in *Through Nature to Christ* 1877 (out of print), of which the sub-title was, *The Ascent of Worship through Illusion to the Truth*, and the dedication, *To the Memory of the Blessed Dead, who, next to Christ, have had most power to help the living by destroying death and by making things invisible real*. But I think my greatest as well as my earliest debt was due to the *In Memoriam* when I began (1858) to read it attentively. The poem first suggests that (ed. 1856) (§ 79) "unused example from the grave" may "reach out dead hands to comfort." Then it describes how (§ 94), while the poet was reading "the noble letters of the dead," there came, what I have called in *Silvanus*, "no vision" but something "more like feeling":

"So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
His living soul was flashed on mine."

such of his fellow-worshippers as can dispense (or think they can dispense) with all these aids; but he feels that if he dishonestly accepted what they can honestly accept, the living bread would live no longer for him, but would be changed into a stone. They trust that they have "the whole loaf," having received it, once for all, from the Book or the Church. He, too, trusts that he has it—but only on condition of receiving it "day by day" from the hands of the Father, through the Eternal Son.

Later on, the poet speaks of (§ 123) "the hands that reach thro' nature moulding men." A "living soul" is more than those "hands," and much more than the "dead hands" of "unused example." The influence of the "living soul" of Jesus of Nazareth might be—so I argued or felt—immeasurably greater than that of Arthur Hallam, even if Jesus were no more than the greatest of the prophets of Israel. But if He was more, and much more, than this, if He was the incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, how much more vivid to the spiritual eye and permanently impressive to the spiritual sense—how infinitely more effective than Tennyson's trance—might be the visions of that "living soul," living after death, made all the more powerful by death, "flashing" itself at first on the souls of those that had loved Him in forms indistinguishable from those of physical vision, and both then and afterwards illuminating their whole being with the light of His presence in their hearts!

From that time forth it was always in my mind that the author of the Fourth Gospel, while not denying the future Parousia on the clouds, realised, as more important, the nearer Parousia when the Father and the Son would come and make their abiding-place in the heart of those that loved the Son and kept His word.

On another important point, the nature of forgiveness, I endeavoured to shew in *Bible Lessons* (1870) (p. 167 foll.) that the actions of the home and the street may illustrate the action of God in this most divine of works, and that we miss a great deal through not understanding its extreme simplicity and its extreme difficulty. But my sketch did not include the Elder Brother as Mediator. For a view of this—worked out with no less beauty than truth so as to shew that forgiveness illustrates Atonement—I should like to refer the reader to *Ethics and Atonement*, by Mr W. F. Lofthouse, 1906, Methuen and Co.

CHAPTER XII

TO ANOTHER FRIENDLY REVIEWER

AFTER writing the last chapter I received another review—also of a very friendly character, and one that affords me the very great pleasure of dealing with a definite objection on a point of Greek—in the *Athenæum* of 15 Dec. 1906. It comments on my treatment of a very important tradition about Christ's resurrection (which says that Christ "*met*" the women near the sepulchre) as follows :

1. "In his interpretations of passages in the Gospels, Dr Abbott, who may be described as a scholarly rationalist, is more ingenious than convincing. Scaurus, for example, who is one of the characters in the romance, explains the words 'took hold of Christ's feet' (Matthew xxviii. 9) by saying that they probably mean 'that the women saw a vision of Christ in the air and "*would have held* it fast by the feet," that is, *desired to do so, but could not.*'" Then, after quoting Scaurus as saying "I could give several instances from the LXX where '*would have*' is thus dropped in translation," my reviewer adds, "It is not unworthy of note that the words in the Gospel καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων *do not offer the slightest suggestion of a vision.*"

As regards the last words, which I have italicised, I have pointed out, in *Notes* (see 2999 (iii) foll. on "Meeting"), that ὑπήντησεν justifies an inference exactly opposite to that of the reviewer. (1) "Meet" is used in connexion with the angels that "*met*" Jacob at Mahanaim (where the LXX interpolates

words indicating that the translator regarded the "meeting" as visionary). (2) It is used in the narrative of Zipporah, describing how the Lord "*met*" her. According to various versions, she "touched," or "held," His "feet" (or the feet of His angel). (3) It is repeatedly used in the visions of Balaam, concerning the Lord "*meeting*" the prophet. (4) It is used by Ben Sira and in *Wisdom* to describe Wisdom going to "*meet*" and enlighten those that seek her. From these facts I conclude that Matthew's peculiar tradition about Christ's "*meeting*" the women, so far from "not offering the slightest suggestion of a vision," decidedly favours the hypothesis of a Semitic original describing a revelation, visible indeed, but only to the eye enlightened by the spirit.

2. The reviewer quotes the preface to *Silanus* as saying that the book "aims at suggesting such conceptions of history, literature, worship, human nature, and divine Being, as point to a foreordained conformation of man to God, to be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, of which the fulfilment may be traced in the Christian writings and the Christian churches of the first and second centuries."

Then he asks, "In plain language what does this mean? What in the sentence just quoted is the relation of the clause with the words 'to be fulfilled,' to that beginning with 'of which the fulfilment'?"

Perhaps, attempting to be brief, I was not quite clear. I said "the fulfilment" when I meant "an increase of progress towards the fulfilment." "In plain language," I meant that (1) God's purpose was to make man in His image, and, in spite of man's deviations, to conform man to it; that (2) the world, in spite of apparent aberrations, shewed signs of a progress towards this fore-ordained conformation before the Incarnation and from the beginning; that (3) this conformation of man to God was fulfilled, so far as the One Man was concerned, in the Incarnation, in the first century; that (4) an increase of progress towards this fulfilment may be traced in

the Christianity of the first two centuries ; that (5) this conformation is "*to be fulfilled* in the Lord Jesus Christ" in the One Church, or One Body of Christ, or One Family of Man, when the Family of mankind is gathered into a Family of God with "peace on earth among men in whom He is well pleased."

3. "Then," continues the reviewer, "we are entitled to ask for definitions which will enable us to understand the meaning of a supernatural but non-miraculous incarnation...."

I thought the meaning was fairly obvious from the tenor of *Silanus*. I meant, first, that Christ was born of two human parents and therefore non-miraculously. But secondly, I meant that, whereas the birth of every human being involves a congenital act in which God, in accordance with the spiritual law of our nature and His, imparts Himself in some degree to the human soul¹, the birth of Jesus of Nazareth involved a unique congenital act whereby there abode in Him all the Fulness of the divine Goodness. According to the flesh, the incarnation was natural ; according to the spirit, it was uniquely supernatural.

What I meant may be illustrated by what the author of the Fourth Gospel says about all believers,—I have quoted it above, but, in view of its misquotation by some of the earliest Christian Fathers, it must be reiterated—(Jn i. 13) "*who were begotten* not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of man (or, husband, *ἀνδρός*) (2371 *a*) but from God." This "begetting"—which refers, not to one but to many, but which Irenæus assumed (2998 (xxxvii foll.)), and Tertullian contended, to be miraculous, and to be applicable to Christ alone in respect of His birth from the Virgin—

¹ To illustrate this, passages were quoted (p. 222, and comp. 225) from Philo, where the child of Sarah, and other children of divine promise, are described by that writer in various terms, but all variously suggesting or asserting birth from a virgin mother.

I assert to be non-miraculous. But it is supernatural. In some sense, the epithet supernatural—that is, above fleshly nature—might be applied to the birth of every babe receiving the light of the world. In a fuller sense it may be applied to what is commonly called “regeneration.” In the case of the birth of Christ, whom I believe to have been sinless, I accept the birth as uniquely supernatural, though not miraculous.

4. I left the last quoted sentence of my reviewer unfinished in order to deal with the conclusion of it separately. He asks for “definitions which will enable us to understand... the meaning of a supernatural but non-miraculous resurrection.”

First I will try to explain my meaning by an instance, without “definition.” Then I will try to give a “definition” of some sort, though it will not satisfy me, and I can hardly hope that it will satisfy him. Then I will repeat my reasons for thinking that, in dealing with Biblical miracles alleged to have occurred, it is best to deal with each miracle separately—so as to be able to say to the allegor, “Now I think I have shewn that this or that did not occur in the way in which you think it occurred.”

First, then, I mean such a resurrection as was manifested to Saul, when Jesus, as he says, “appeared” to him—where Matthew might have said “met” him—near the walls of Damascus. If Jesus had come to Saul and “touched” him I should have called the act miraculous. It would have broken the usual custom—not to call it “law”—of spiritual manifestations. Of course, if I believed that Isaiah’s lips were materially “touched” with material fire from the altar, and that there were other instances of “touching” by spirits materially affecting the flesh, I should alter my views. “Touching”—I should then say—“is in accordance with the laws of visions. It is not miraculous. I am ready to accept it as a fact, if supported by good evidence.” At present I do

not accept it. Nor do I believe that what Paul saw and heard could have been seen and heard by anyone whose mind and soul had not been previously prepared, as his had been, to see and hear sights and sounds imperceptible to the eye and ear of the flesh¹.

Whether my readers like or dislike my distinctive use of the two *words*, supernatural and miraculous, I think they ought to see the distinction between the alleged *facts*. If Isaiah tells us that he saw the Holy One on the throne, that is supernatural. A manifestation may be called "supernatural" when it is, in various degrees, *above the nature* of the ordinary fleshly man. But it may be at the same time "non-miraculous"—in the sense in which "miraculous" is commonly used—because it does not break any law (that we recognise) of non-human nature, or any law of that "spiritual nature wherein man is most like God²," who intends man's flesh to be more and more subordinated to man's spirit. This is my attempt at an impossible "definition." Let others better it.

5. "Definitions," says the reviewer, "we do not get...."

Scaurus, Silanus, and Clemens can hardly be expected to utter exact "definitions" or to do more than lead up to them. And I have given reasons above (pp. 9–10) for always avoiding definitions in dealing with "miracles." In defining, you, or your opponents, are almost certain to use the terms (1) "*law* of (2) *nature*," or perhaps (3) "*will* of (4) *God*." Here, at once, are four new terms that, in turn, need to be defined and—I venture to say—cannot all be defined. I have tried to oblige my reviewer by "defining"—after a fashion. But in order to do it, I have had to call to my aid the Pauline technical terms "flesh" and "spirit." And who can easily and exactly define these? To the saying *Quis*

¹ I do not of course forget the *stigmata* of St Francis. But, as far as I know, no one attributes them to any vision in which "touching" played a part.

² See the Dedication, and the remarks on it, pp. 80 foll.

custodiet custodes? we may well add, *Quis definit definitia?* This question seems to me to lie, like a worm, at the root of all so-called "systems" of philosophy.

For these reasons it has occurred to me that the best way to get at the truth, without evasions on either side, would be to avoid definitions of "miracle" and "miraculous," and to grapple with alleged facts, somewhat as follows:—

(1) "We agree, do we not, that the stopping of the sun in the Old Testament, and the withering of the fig-tree in the New, and a multitude of similar wonders, are, if true, 'miracles'? Well, I assert that the 'sun' was not 'stopped' except in a poem, and that the 'fig-tree' was not withered except in a parable. (2) As to the passage of the Red Sea, the drying up of the Jordan, and the battle of Kishon (when the 'stars in their courses fought against Sisera') I accept these as poetic accounts of deliverances of Israel by God, acting through natural forces, like the deliverance of England from the Spanish Armada. They are neither miracles nor supernatural, but history—only history written as poetry, so as to shew how the forces of nature can sometimes be discerned as suggesting that God fights against unrighteousness. (3) As to the miracles of Gideon, Samson, Elijah, and Elisha, I could give you reasons for rejecting most of them, such as the fleece, the jawbone, the calling down of fire from heaven, and the floating of the axe in the water, while retaining—at all events as not improbable—the revivification of the child of "the Shunammite." Some of these narratives may be shewn to have sprung from metaphor misunderstood, some from exaggeration, some few to be marvellous, but not to involve what you would call suspensions of any law of nature."

Then I should continue, "Do you agree with me that, if I could explain the origin of all the 'miracles' in the Bible in one of the three ways suggested in this very rough classification, or in other similar ways, they ought none of them to be

called miraculous—beginning with the taking of Adam's rib to make a woman, and ending with the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven? If so, let us sit down together, and investigate them one by one. We shall have all the more time to look laboriously and thoroughly into facts because we shall not be wasting time and temper in discussions about abstract terms and metaphysical entities or nonentities."

6. I return to the reviewer's sentence left unfinished above. "Definitions," he says, "we do not get, but in regard to the resurrection we are told that God draws back the veil from our hearts and gives us a convincing sense of Christ at His right hand and in ourselves, and also that this 'conviction' is derived from no source but the convincing spirit of the Saviour, coming to us in various ways."

Here the reviewer may have misunderstood me. Or I may have misunderstood him. I certainly represented Junius Silanus as being converted in a special way by the convincing Spirit of the Saviour, coming to him in what Silanus himself describes as "not a vision but more like feeling," and bringing him to the foot of the cross. But I tried hard to shew that this process of *pathos* followed a long series of processes of *logos*, which prepared the way for the *pathos*. And I never intended to suggest that the Spirit must be regarded as necessarily "coming to us"—that is, "*us modern Christians*"—in precisely the same way.

Not that I disavow the doctrine here imputed to me, provided that it is carefully construed. I do not and cannot think that anyone derives spiritual benefit from a belief in Christ's resurrection, as long as he accepts it as a fact with which he has no concern (as a boy might accept "William the Conqueror 1066"), without the faintest touch of a convincing sense (such as Christ's Spirit alone can give) that His resurrection was according to the fitness of things; that in it and by it we human beings are "saved"; and that, behind the veil of the flesh and of what we call matter, there

is at work a vast spiritual agency working for our good. No child, not many men and women perhaps, can put these things into words. But a very little child on the mother's knee can be made to feel something of what the mother feels about them. And what passes from the mother to the child "is derived," in my belief, "from the convincing Spirit of the Saviour coming to us"—I italicise the important words—"in various ways."

7. I have laid emphasis on the clause "*in various ways*," because the reviewer may possibly have used it to shew that among these "*various ways*" I include *the visible manifestations of Christ's resurrection to His apostles*. But would the reader guess that? I think not. Still less would he be led to it by what follows: "The body of Christ did not leave the tomb, according to Dr Abbott, but the convincing Spirit of the Saviour *comes to us, and therefore*"—I italicise again—"we may say that we believe in a supernatural resurrection."

The reviewer's "therefore" is not mine. By "*we*," I think he means "believers in the present day." If so, I should assert that "we" believe in a supernatural resurrection on several grounds, and, in particular, because we believe in the supernatural resurrection as recorded by St Paul and the evangelists. So I should wish to amend my critic's statement as follows:

"The body of Christ did not leave the tomb. But the Spirit of the Saviour came (according to the testimony of Paul) in visible form and with audible voices not only to single persons—Peter, James, and Paul himself—but also to groups of disciples. It cannot indeed be denied that the different accounts of the manifestations present many difficulties both severally and collectively. They imply that some at first doubted, even while the manifestation was proceeding; and that some failed to recognise the Saviour for a time, even after they had heard His voice as well as seen Him. Moreover Matthew, as we have seen above,

appears to have mistaken a spiritual for a material 'meeting.' But difficulties might well be expected by any psychologist or historian in the accounts of the manifestations of the spirit of such a one as Christ, after death. We *therefore*"—this is where I should first use *therefore*—"accept these manifestations (adding also those seen by the women, which St Paul omits) as truthful though perhaps exaggerated statements, and as resting on a basis of psychological and historical fact. We also find Saul the persecutor, in the strength derived (as he said) from the Spirit of Christ, after one of these manifestations, converting multitudes of non-believers to Christianity. Later on, and through many centuries, Christians preaching in strength largely derived from their belief in these manifestations, have (as we believe) helped to guide the world towards righteousness.

"*Therefore*"—I should say for the second time—"we have another reason for believing that these visions of the risen Saviour were true, because the belief in them has worked for good in developing many generations of men in many churches of Christ. If a key opens door after door in a palace with many doors,—each door having a key, and a different key, of its own—we say, 'This is the master-key.' Something of the same kind we say concerning the belief in Christ's supernatural resurrection—even though in very early times we believe it to have been materialised through one of those illusions which appear to be the conditions of man's ascent to spiritual truth—'*It is the master-key.*'"

An additional reason for saying "*therefore*" would (in my opinion) be found in the residuum of truth (left after large deductions) in the psychological researches made during the last thirty years. Psychology so far as it is a result of *logos* appears to me to be "derived from Christ's spirit *coming to us in various ways.*"

Lastly I reach the "*therefore*" allowed me by my reviewer—the "*therefore*" of individual experience. This some

may deny to be applicable to all. Undoubtedly it applies in very various degrees. Still I think we ought all to have felt in *some* degree that the Spirit of the risen Saviour, confirming the evidence derived from the gospels and from the history of the Church, has come to us at one or more moments of our lives, with a special appeal, as if He said, "Can I not make you feel, in spite of all the evil in the world of the flesh without you and within you, that the good, the spirit, is the reality, the eternal; invisible to you at present because it is behind a veil—but only a thin veil? You believe this in a fashion, I know. I hear you repeat it at church,—‘The third day He rose again from the dead.’ But can I not make you *feel* it? Can I not help you to *know* that it *was to be*, that it *must have been*? Can you not *see* that it is *part of the plan*? You cannot? Look then! I draw back the veil. Now you *see* that which IS. You have caught a glimpse of the eternal LOVE, the Father, the Son, the Spirit—the Family of God."

8. The reviewer continues, "It will be difficult to assure ourselves that we are using language correctly, or are not misleading men, when we say that the coming of that spirit is our warrant for confessing that we believe in Christ's supernatural resurrection 'after He had offered Himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.'"

These words add to the strength of my conviction that my position has not been quite rightly conceived by my critic—at least if he uses the words "*is our warrant*" to mean "*is our sole warrant*." "The coming of that spirit" helps us to read the lessons of the Bible, the Church, the Cosmos, as well as the lesson of our own separate Microcosm. Each of these shews us its "warrant." The Spirit of Christ helps us to sum up all these "warrants," and to take all of them to heart.

9. Some may wonder why the reviewer, in his last quotation, included the words "after He had offered Himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world," when

he might have stopped short at the words "supernatural resurrection." Perhaps he desired simply to do me justice by giving the whole sentence. But in any case he was right in including them. I desired to suggest the belief—which runs all through *Silanus* as well as *Paradosis*—that the Sacrifice and the Resurrection go together. Some great man of science, I believe, said that the material world was made "all of a piece." So (as it seems to me) was the spiritual world made "all of a piece." The Law of "living through dying," like the Law of "receiving through giving," runs through the invisible Macrocosm. As the Suffering Servant in Isaiah "divides the spoils" because he has "poured out his soul unto death," so it is with every martyr for every good cause, and with the greatest Martyr of all.

10. The review concludes as follows, "The interpretation of the incident of the women taking hold of the feet of Christ illustrates Dr Abbott's ingenuity, as his theory of a vision illustrates his rationalism. He elaborates as a grammarian the theory—not unknown, but differently treated—that the belief in the resurrection of Christ was based on certain visions, and in so doing rejects the miraculous, but retains the supernatural resurrection. We may readily understand what he rejects, but not what he retains."

As to the accusation—for such it is—of "ingenuity," I hope I have disposed of it. I have merely introduced Scaurus as referring to facts. I should have liked to make him refer to more facts, *e.g.* the facts about "meeting"—and others, which the reader will find in the *Notes*, shewing that through Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac, there runs a danger of confusing "touching" with "drawing near." But there was a limit, imposed by the laws of readable fiction, to what I could make Scaurus know and quote. If my readers will refer to my *Notes on New Testament Criticism* (2999 (i) foll.) and then consider the reviewer's charge of "ingenuity," I hope they will pronounce me "not guilty."

It is not so easy to meet the objection implied in the following italicised words, "*We may readily understand what he rejects, but not what he retains.*"

Of this I admit the force. Chapter X above, addressed "to a friend," shews that I admit it, even while pointing out that the objection may not always have as much force as it has now. With the view of shewing how very much we shall "retain," I have added to my *Notes* an Appendix on "The Son of Man" as giving a clue to the meaning of Christ's whole course of act and word. Moreover, through many parts of *Silanus*, I tried to shew that "*what I retain*" is One who thought of Himself, and spoke of Himself, as the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, and as to be "delivered up" by the Father—whereas it is popularly supposed that the word implies *treachery* ("betrayed" by Judas). Surely there is a great difference between these two thoughts! And should not the difference of the thoughts affect our estimate of the Thinker, and of what we "*retain*" in possessing Him?

My point is, that Jesus of Nazareth, regarded as non-miraculous, ought to be—and will be, before long—recognised as being much more divine than He is supposed to be at present by those who regard Him as essentially miraculous. When that truth is understood, people will also more "readily understand" how very much a non-believer in the miraculous may still "*retain.*"

11. As to the statement of my view, as being that "the belief in the resurrection of Christ was based on certain visions," it is correct, but I should prefer to state it differently: "*It was based on the personality of Christ, and on spiritual or psychological laws.*" These made it impossible that He, dying almost in the act of bequeathing Himself to His disciples, should fail of His purpose. Because He, while living, forced His disciples to conceive of an altogether new kind of love and to trust in Him with an altogether new kind of faith, therefore, when dead to the eyes of the flesh, He appeared to

the eyes of their spirits and dwelt permanently in their hearts."

Even after this restatement, I shall not feel surprised if some still say, with my reviewer, "We find it difficult to understand this." In view of—and in consequence of—this difficulty, I have prefixed to the volume a Dedication and a Supplementary Dedication¹ intended to elucidate the subject. It seems to me that the prophets of Israel regarded themselves as "formed" or "called from the womb"² to see God's will in visions as well as to hear it in voices. So did Saul of Tarsus regard himself as "appointed"³ to "see" Jesus raised from the dead. Isaiah saw the Vision of "the King, the Lord of Hosts." Saul saw the "Righteous One," raised from the dead. It is significant, that, in the last prayer of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, righteousness appears to be regarded as superior to holiness. After "*Holy* Father," there comes as a climax, "*Righteous* Father, the world hath not known thee⁴." If that represents the fact—namely that the world had not attained to the knowledge of the "righteous Father," and that this was a superior revelation to that of the "holy Father," then we can see how, in the evolution of Israel

¹ The Supplement to the Dedication was intended to shew the reader that he must be prepared to face the man of the world's view of visions and voices, especially when the visions come to the lower kind of Seer, one in whom there is a manifest streak of eccentricity. I do not deny that Lord Macaulay was largely justified in his strictures on George Fox; but he seems to me to have committed a great mistake in referring the reader for specimens of his visions to a single page in Fox's Journal, when, by including the preceding page that lies open at the same time to the reader's view, he might have called attention to one of the most beautiful passages in English literature, describing a vision that will go straight to the heart of many Christians. Nor can I help thinking that, long after Macaulay's estimate of Fox is quite forgotten, people that speak English will retain some recollection of the "infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness."

² Is. xlix. 1, 5, comp. Jer. i. 5, Ps. xxii. 9-10.

³ Acts xxii. 14.

⁴ Jn xvii. 11, 25.

through visions and voices, there was a great ascent from the sublime vision of Isaiah to the still more spiritually sublime vision of the Righteous Son who had died for man and who lived, so that He was able to say "I became dead and behold I am living for ever and ever and I have the keys of death and Hades¹."

In the end, when we have become familiar with it, I think we shall have gained much and lost little² by regarding

¹ Rev. i. 18.

² "Little." A friend urges me to substitute "nothing" for "little." Perhaps he is right, if we can rightly say that we lose "nothing" in passing from the illusions of childhood to the truths (or less illusive illusions) of manhood. But can we "rightly say" this? Bacon says somewhere that *The Gallic War* is more wonderful than *Arthur's Round Table*. So it is—for those who have eyes to see the invisible forces at work in *The Gallic War*. But not for others.

Each man must speak for himself. For myself, I must confess that I have lost *something* in being forced to give up the story of the tangible resurrection of Christ, as also in giving up the story of the creation in seven days, and the other stories of God's anthropomorphic, definite, direct, and materialistic intervention in the affairs of Israel. They were, most of them, so easy to understand. Some of them, like Grimm's fairy tales, shewed God doing just what we ourselves should have done had we been in God's place and able to do—as children say—"just whatever we liked." Others attracted us by their picturesqueness; others by an agreeable sense of things being turned upside down; almost all had some charm that might well make the child that had once believed them loth to give them up.

Much more is this true about the story of the tangible resurrection of Christ. The craving for it is as old as the unbelief of Thomas. He was rebuked for it, it is true; but apparently his craving was satisfied. Great doubt attends the interpretation of that mysterious story. See *Notes on N.T. Criticism*, 2824* (i), 2895, 2999. It seems to me that the Fourth Gospel suggests a mystical "touching" of the spiritual body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Be this as it may, it must always remain true that, as regards this fundamental doctrine of Christ's resurrection, we must not talk lightly about "losing *nothing*" in giving up our old belief. We shall have lost a great deal unless we have gained a new and living belief, rooted and grounded in all our nature and experience, growing as we grow, and destined to abide and bear fruit in us throughout this life and the next. For a long time to come, I think, most of those

the revelation of the risen Saviour—like the revelation of the Lord lifted up on the throne—as a vision. Does anyone seriously feel less affected by Isaiah's vision of the latter because he is forced to reject the notion that the seraph cried "Holy! Holy! Holy!" with a voice that could have been heard by king Uzziah, if the tyrant had been in the temple at the time and standing by the side of the prophet? Or does anyone suppose that the prophet's lips were "touched" and "hallowed" with a *real*—as we use the word *real* about stage-arrangements—a *real* "live coal," conveyed from a substantial "altar" with tangible "tongs"?

What is it that makes us willing to dispense with the test of touch in the earlier vision, but unwilling in the later? It cannot be anything in the Creed. For the clause professing belief "In the resurrection of *the body*," does not imply—no one, I suppose, would venture to assert that it did imply—a tangible body. It implies the resurrection of an intangible body for ourselves; and it would seem only consistent to suppose that the body of the risen Saviour was also intangible.

No, the obstacle lies, partly in our fleshly unwillingness to believe in the reality of anything that cannot be seen and touched by the flesh, partly in the text of a very few traditions in some of the gospels. Not one of these traditions can be confidently said to be attested by three or even by two evangelists. The text is not always certain and may be

who exchange the old for the new will find that, though they have gained much, they must confess they have lost a "little." For others, bred up in the acceptance of the resurrection of the spiritual body, things may be different. To them the Gospel of the Resurrection may come, unmixed with any historic doubts and fears, but conveying a new, wholesome, and stimulating sense of the moral effort demanded from them if they are to live up to its Law, so as to (Phil. iii. 10) "know" Christ, "and the power of his resurrection," pressing forward, "if by any means" they "may attain to the complete resurrection from the dead (εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν)."

corrupt. But, whatever may have been the intention of the original traditions, there can be no doubt that the writers of certain versions of these traditions in Matthew and Luke (about John we cannot be so sure) intended them to convey the impression that Christ's risen body was perceptible to the fleshly touch.

The remedy for the first evil is to liberate our thoughts from the yoke of materialism, and to take a more ample view of the Universe. Not—as I have said before—that we must ever *mix* Thoughtland and Factland. But we must make ourselves modest by trying to conceive that there may be a Thoughtland, as much more real than Factland as the land of three dimensions seems to us more real than the land of two.

The remedy for the second evil is partly grammatical, partly historical. History may do much. It will shew us how often great truths have been refracted through imperfect traditions; how little ground there is for supposing that narratives in the New Testament, any more than those in the Old, are free from such refraction; and how much the Church has suffered when it has tried to suppress belief in the results of scientific research by means of a Biblical *Non possumus*.

But Grammar and verbal criticism may also do something. In the light of Grammar, some of the gospel passages that appear most plainly and unequivocally to favour a tangible resurrection may be shewn to proceed only from single evangelists, who have been misled by definite linguistic ambiguities upon which the critic can put his finger. Thus, while the truthfulness of the evangelists may be shewn to be unimpaired, we may succeed in disentangling and drawing forth to light the truth that they may have failed to express.

CHAPTER XIII

TO THE READER: A SUMMARY

AS this book is based on the six preceding parts of *Diatessarica* and is written largely with a view to the Eighth Part, it will be convenient here to summarise the past work and its relation to the future.

I. Part I, *Clue* (Par. 1-272) gives specimens of error in the LXX arising mainly (1) from confusing one Hebrew word with another, (2) from combining, or "conflating," two renderings. Many instances of "conflation" are supplied in *Clue* from the LXX.

To these, I could now add many more from the Aramaic Targums. In translating, there is a very natural tendency to "conflate." Not being quite certain that the rendering x is correct, you insert y over the line or in the margin. The scribe copying your MS. adds y to the text. So it goes down to posterity in the form $x+y$.

It is shewn in *Clue* that some translators display this tendency much more than others, and that a "conflative" book must be criticized differently from a "non-conflative" one. In O.T. the First Book of Esdras and Daniel are shewn to be "conflative" versions. As regards N.T., *Clue* shews that Mark contains many signs of being "conflated," e.g. Mk i. 32 "It having become late (x), when the sun had set (y)," where the parallel Matthew has the first of these phrases (x) and the parallel Luke the second (y).

To take another instance, Prof. Dalman asks (*Words*, p. 263) "Why should 'man' in Mark ii. 27 be ὁ ἄνθρωπος but in ii. 28 ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου?" When we examine the passage, we find that Mark says "And he said unto them, (*x*) *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath*: so that (*y*) *The Son of man is lord even of the sabbath*": whereas Matthew and Luke say "For (*y*) *the Son of man is lord of the sabbath*."

Having regard to the very many instances where Mark appears to have "conflated," we infer that this is probably one of them. He seems to have combined two translations, of which one, *y*, is boldly metaphorical and Aramaic, the other, *x*, is a paraphrase more intelligible to Greeks; and, as often happens (*Clue 31*) the less accurate version, *x*, comes before the more accurate, *y*. Matthew and Luke have preferred to give the literal translation alone¹. The recognition of this tendency in Mark may make a great difference in our criticism of all the gospels.

2. Part II, *The Corrections of Mark Adopted by Matthew and Luke* (Par. 273-552) discusses the question how we can discover, from internal evidence, which of the Synoptic gospels is the earliest. It demonstrates that Matthew and Luke (so far as concerns that portion of their gospels in which they cover the same ground as Mark) copied inde-

¹ Prof. Dalman says elsewhere (*Words*, p. 255) "Mark alone draws the inference (ii. 27 foll.) that the 'Son of man' is lord even of the Sabbath, on the ground that the Sabbath was instituted for the sake of men. Hence, in the reasoning of Mark, what applies to mankind in general applies pre-eminently to the 'Son of man.'" Reasoning as above, we should rather say that Mark drew no inference at all, but simply—in his "desire not to omit anything" (*Clue 23*)—"conflated" two traditions. Papias, it is true, describes this "desire" as "a desire not to omit anything of what he [Mark] had heard nor to misstate anything therein." But we may very well suppose that it included also "a desire not to omit anything of what he had *read*," in written traditions where he found two versions, for both of which there was something to be said.

pendently from Mark—not indeed from Mark in the exact form in which we now possess it, but from an edition of Mark containing certain corrections.

Of these corrections the more important are given in full (331–533) with discussions on their nature and on the motives for them severally. The minor ones are given in an Appendix. Incidentally Part II points out the very great differences in style (536–9) between different books of the canonical LXX, although all are translations. *Corrections*, as a whole, shews that many of the major divergences of Matthew and Luke from Mark may be explained from translation.

The volume concludes with an Appendix on Oral Tradition as illustrated by quotations from the sayings of Ben Sira.

3. Part III, *From Letter to Spirit* (Par. 553–1149) attempts to give the reader the means of investigating the divergent accounts in the four gospels of the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ at the outset of His public career. It adds a history of the Jewish belief in *Bath Kol*, that is, in effect, “Voice from Heaven.” Discussing in detail the Voices (1) at the Baptism, (2) at the Transfiguration, and (3) on the occasion recorded by John alone (786–1028), it endeavours to shew the connexion between them, severally; their relation to Jewish thought; and the historical and spiritual facts underlying the several narratives.

The Appendices to this volume include (1076–1115) a reprint of Pinner’s treatise on *Bath Kol*, and several short discussions that appeared to the author likely to be useful for reference in future parts of *Diatessarica*.

4. Part IV, *Paradosis*, or, *In the Night in which He was (?) betrayed* (Par. 1150–1435) throws doubt—as the query in the title is intended to suggest—on the accuracy of the rendering of 1 Cor. xi. 23 (R.V.) “he was betrayed.” It maintains that, when Jesus predicted His Passion, He mentioned, not “betraying” but “delivering up”—and this,

as the act, not of a traitor but of God. So St Paul says that Christ was "*delivered up* for our sins [that is, by God] but raised again for our justification." And the Institution of the Eucharist implies, if it does not actually express, the Son's identification of Himself with the Father in this act, so that He may be said to have "delivered Himself up" for mankind—the part played by Judas being quite subordinate.

This, though the shortest of all the parts of *Diatessarica*, seems to the author perhaps the most important, if its conclusions are correct. It gives a different aspect of our Lord's predictions from that which is commonly assumed—or at all events from that which the author assumed, up till recently. It connects, not only His special words about His passion, but also the whole of His doctrine, with sacrifice, atonement, forgiveness of sins, martyrdom, and a martyr's triumph. It also prepares the way for understanding why John, finding that the divine act of the Father in delivering up the Son for mankind was subordinated in some men's minds to the instrumental "delivering up" by Judas, felt bound to draw out the meaning of Christ's doctrine on the former subject even though he had to depart from the language assigned to Him by all the Synoptists.

5. Part V, *Johannine Vocabulary* (Par. 1436–1885) compares the vocabulary of the fourth gospel with that of the three, in lists taking the latter (1) three together, (2) two together, and (3) singly. John is shewn to be an "allusive" writer, alluding, for example, in his first sentence, to the first sentence of Genesis. Reasons are given for thinking the whole of his book to be of this character. Latent references are found in it not only to Scriptural types and texts, but also to Philo, to contemporary sayings of the Stoic philosophy such as we find in Epictetus, and to other traditions of various kinds, but, more particularly, to sayings of the earlier gospels: sometimes in an unexpected manner, and with a

new application, as, for example, in the phrase "recline the head" (1451, 1858) applied by Matthew, Luke, and John, to our Lord—but in very different ways.

The evangelist is also shewn to be an extremely subtle writer, fond of playing on synonyms, or what might better be called "homoionyms"—for there are no real "synonyms" in John (*Joh. Gram.* p. 645). When he avoids, as he often does, the words and phrases of the Synoptic vocabulary, investigation shews that he always has a reason for so doing. Sometimes it is because the words and phrases were likely to be, or had already been, hardened into technical dogmas out of which the life had passed. In such cases he prefers to express the Synoptic propositions in Johannine words. But sometimes he appears to differ from one or more of the Synoptists (and especially from Luke) on more serious grounds. In such cases, while using the same words, he appears to express or suggest a wholly different meaning, as, for example, in his use of the phrase "the son of Joseph" (1776-9).

Concerning this volume, amidst criticisms that have been always (so far as I know) of a very favourable character, one or two remarks have come to my notice to the effect that the lists do not include the Johannine Epistles. This non-inclusion was intentional. To have included the Epistles would have been (though not quite to the same extent) like including the Acts of the Apostles (along with Luke's Gospel) in an attempt to compare the vocabulary of Luke with that of Mark and Matthew. To the 24 chapters of Luke's Gospel if there were added the 28 chapters of the Acts, it is obvious that all comparison of the resulting 52 chapters with the 16 chapters of Mark and the 28 chapters of Matthew would be numerically fallacious—and not quite trustworthy either from a literary point of view, since the subject of Luke's Acts is so different from that of Luke's Gospel.

I wished to ascertain what sort of language John used as

compared with that of the Synoptists, when relating, as they also related, the life of the Saviour—not what language he used when addressing the brethren in his own person. The style, as well as the vocabulary, of one and the same writer, might well vary a great deal in circumstances so different. John, it is true, varies much less than might have been expected. Still, to have included his Epistles would have destroyed the statistical value of the numbers attached to the several lists of the gospel-words as they now stand.

6. Part VI, *Johannine Grammar* (Par. 1886–2799) aims at two objects. The first is to ascertain the evangelist's meaning. The second is to compare and contrast his gospel with that of the Synoptists. "*A great deal is omitted that would be inserted in a Grammar of N.T. Greek, or in a Grammar that proposed to examine the differences between Johannine and, for example, Pauline style*!" On the other hand, a great deal is inserted that would not find place in a treatise attempting simply to elucidate the obscurities of the Fourth Gospel.

The opinion expressed in the Preface to *Paradosis* (p. ix) that, before long, critics would agree as to "the general intervention of John in cases where Luke deviates from, or omits, a tradition in Mark (1282–8, 1309, 1311, 1344, 1373)," is confirmed in *Johannine Grammar* (see "Index" at the end

¹ This is quoted from *Joh. Gram.* 1887. I italicise here because in the course of a long, friendly, and most appreciative criticism in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. xxvii, No. 3, there are indications that this passage escaped the notice of the writer. For example, he calls attention to John's non-use of μέλλω with the future infinitive, and adds, "No remark from Dr Abbott." I was bound to abstain from "remark." For this idiom is non-occurrent in the Synoptists as well as in John. It is also practically non-occurrent in N.T. (Acts xi. 28, xxiv. 15, xxvii. 10 μέλλειν with εἰσεσθαι, being hardly worth considering). If I had included "remarks" on such points as these, my book—already somewhat too big to handle with comfort—would have become twice as big, and half as useful.

of that vol.) by many additional instances. Further proof is also given of John's "allusiveness." In particular, it is shewn (2644 (i)) that the interpretation suggested in *Johannine Vocabulary* of "recline the head" is supported by Origen, who thrice assumes this to be the meaning.

7*. The story of *Silanus the Christian*, though not numbered as one of the volumes of *Diatessarica*, plays a part in the doctrine that the series attempts to convey. Besides instilling, in a popular form, such essential rudiments of literary criticism as bear on the priority of Mark to Matthew and Luke, and besides attempting to liberate readers from a confusion of words from which Epictetus himself was shewn to be not entirely free—*Silanus* emphasizes the fundamental difference between the theories of Stoicism and Christianity, namely that, according to the former, the universe moves round and round, but, according to the latter, it also moves on and on¹.

Further, it points out the continuity between the Old Testament and the New, and, in particular, the latent dependence of Mark upon prophecy (although Mark seldom quotes the

¹ According to the latter view, what is called the Fall of Man, though it would be a terrible descent in respect of pleasurable existence, would indicate a rise in respect of blessedness and real happiness, being an ascent from animalism to humanism. This was the view suggested in the first of my *Cambridge Sermons* 1875 (out of print), further developed in *Through Nature to Christ* 1877 (out of print), of which the sub-title was *The Ascent of Worship through Illusion to the Truth*.

I assert nothing about the origins of the story in Genesis, nor about the motives of its originators and transmitters, nor about a divine influence at work on and in the great poems and allegories that have moulded mankind as it now is. My remarks comprise simply the spiritual interpretation that might be given to the Fall of Man by a Christian partially or entirely accepting Darwin's conclusions.

Also I do not deny that the "moving on and on" is untrue about special races; and that it may possibly have been broken by retrogression, perhaps real, perhaps apparent, even in the "remnant" that has been from time to time in the front of progress.

prophets) and the fact that the "gospel" of Jesus is assumed by Mark to take up, and carry on, and develop and fulfil, the "glad tidings" predicted by Isaiah.

Silanus includes—what the preceding parts of *Diatessarica* necessarily excluded—a view of the gospel of St Paul, shewing its apparent independence of any belief in the miraculous birth of the Saviour, and in what may be called a "tangible resurrection." It enforces the Apostle's absolute dependence upon the personal and spiritual presence of Christ dwelling in his heart. It exhibits to the reader this single convert, this physically weak and (from a bodily point of view) "contemptible" Jew—without wealth, friends, or influence, amid the violent opposition of his countrymen and the occasional oppression of the imperial authorities—overrunning whole provinces of Asia and Greece, and converting multitudes to the faith in Christ, under the influence of his Saviour's "constraining love."

The thought of such a love leads Junius Silanus—and to some extent his friend Scaurus—to questions bearing on man's nature and powers, especially the power to forgive. Scaurus, who remains unconverted, maintains that there is no such power, but only the power to remit penalty. Silanus, who is converted, is led to a different conclusion. He finds in humanity a power that he cannot explain but is forced to recognise—one that enables men to bear one another's "burdens," even when the burdens are spiritual, a faculty that appears to him to throw light on the forgiveness of sins described in the Christian gospels. Scaurus is ready to agree with Hamlet in exclaiming, about the "piece of work" called a Man, "How noble in reason!" But Silanus is being led on to add—and to add with ever-growing emphasis—"How infinite in faculty!" and, as regards this strangely beautiful act of forgiving, "In action, how like a God!" That would be a misquotation. For Hamlet—who is, in theory and talk, an Epictetian—chooses "apprehension," not "action," as his

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characteristic of God¹. But Silanus is being led on to things beyond the horizon of Epictetus.

Both Scaurus and Silanus repeatedly mention the old saying of the priest in Plato, "You, Greeks, are always children," with an uneasy misgiving that perhaps it is so with the Romans, too, in comparison with the Jews—in matters of religion. The whole volume is intended to confirm this, and to suggest somewhat more, namely, that the highest truth about God is conveyed in several aspects, partly by worshipping Him (with the Hebrews) as the One Creator ; partly by delighting in Him (with the Greeks) as identified with the multitudinous harmony of the Cosmos ; partly by reverencing and obeying Him (with the Romans) as representing the unity of just Law and wise Decree ; but most of all by feeling that we are in Him, and He in us, bound in a mysterious union, like the unity of a perfectly united family below, corresponding to an eternal unity above, where God was never alone—this, at least, is the suggestion in *Sīlanus*—but the Eternal Son was always with Him, and there was never

¹ *Hamlet* ii. 2. 315 "What a piece of work is a man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust ?"

In other words, Hamlet, feeling in himself the weakness of the logical *logos*, "apprehension," as compared with the strength of *pathos*, in the sense of emotion, exaggerates, as Epictetus does, the divineness of the former.

It is because Hamlet feels that he is an Epictetian in nothing but talk and theory, that he idealizes Horatio, as being an Epictetian in practice :

"As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks."

In Horatio, "apprehension" is really a strong point. He knows precisely how long the ghost stayed—"while one with moderate haste might tell a hundred." When he is abruptly corrected, by his fellow witnesses, with "Longer ! Longer !" he does not say, "You are wrong."

absent the Eternal Spirit of Love; so that the home on earth prepares us for the home in heaven.

7. The present work, *Apologia*—originally intended to include three portions, (1) an *Explanation and Defence of Silanus*, (2) *Notes on Silanus*, (3) *Indices to Diatessarica*, but now including only the first part—has received sufficient comment in the Preface.

Indices to Diatessarica is in the press, and will appear (I trust) in the course of the present year. As regards the intended *Notes on Silanus* (now in the press), the Preface has explained why it will be published under a new title, *Notes on New Testament Criticism*. For some reasons, I should have liked to alter the title still further, and to call it after an Appendix—extending to more than a hundred pages—on a subject of the greatest importance (bearing not only on the whole purpose of *Silanus*, but also on all that this series may hereafter contain)—the meaning of “The Son of Man” (2998).

The title has been much discussed of late, and abundance of research and learning, especially Semitic learning, has been bestowed on its elucidation. Using some of this, I have done my best to understand it myself and elucidate it for others, adding some things (omitted or but briefly touched on by Prof. Dalman in his *Words of Jesus*, and by Dr Schmidt in his valuable article on “Son of Man” in *The Encyclopædia Biblica*) about the early Christian interpretation of it. In particular I have set forth somewhat fully the apparent belief

Nor does he say, “I may be wrong.” What he says is, “*Not while I saw it.*” Perhaps he reflected that his companions had seen the ghost twice, and might have confused two occasions together. Perhaps he did not wish to be rude. Perhaps he felt that they were wrong but that he could not prove it, for a ghost might be visible longer to some than to others. Perhaps he felt that he could only be sure of what he had seen with his own eyes. In any case, that is what he says, and it is a model of cool scientific statement indicative of scientific “apprehension.” But it does not seem that kind of “apprehension” which ought to be selected as the special characteristic of divine nature.

of Justin, and the unhesitating assumption of Irenæus—supported by the arguments of Tertullian—that *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου*, or “*filius hominis*,” must mean “Son of the Virgin,” the Virgin being *ἄνθρωπος*, or “*homo*.” Hence I have also shewn how necessary was the protest of Origen that we “*must not look for a certain particular man, or human being (ἄνθρωπος)*” as the parent of Christ, but must regard Him as the Son of Man in the sense in which one of the parables likens God to “a man” (2998 (xlii-v)).

But when all is done that critics and theologians can do, they will not have done enough (I think) to convey Christ’s sublime meaning to the diseased mind of one who will make no effort—as it is said in *Macbeth*—to “minister to himself,” and to keep his eyes open to such glimmerings of goodness as he can find it possible to discern in the hearts of ordinary “sons of men,” as well as in his own. Without such a belief or prepossession, no Christian can safely hold fast to the belief of Silanus—upon which Tertullian pours contempt—that *all* believers (Jn i. 13) “were begotten not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of man, but from God,” and that our Lord “was begotten” in the same way, only by a unique congenital act of a spiritual kind, so that what we have in part, He had in its fulness.

Negatively and positively we must school ourselves into a right prepossession. Negatively we must not bow before the startlingly grand, colossal, domineering type of humanity. Not, of course, that we must not distinguish between a Pistol, with no brains, to whom the world is “mine oyster,” and a Napoleon, who is all brain, and to whom the world is “my establishment in which I must have order.” But to admire a great organizer is not to bow before him, especially when he brings both self and empire to rack and ruin because, being all *logos* and no *pathos*, he has miscalculated the power of the still small voice of human nature.

Positively, we must school ourselves into a love, a greater and a bolder love, of human goodness. We like goodness, of course; but, too often, with a patronising taint, as rich vulgarity may patronise a poor relation. We are half ashamed of it. Before the throne of Nimrod we hardly like to confess that we are related to Abraham¹. Never can we understand what Christ meant by "Son of man" if we feel shame for the noblest part of our humanity, which is also His.

It has been suggested above (p. 66) that in this respect, a great poet may sometimes help us. Poets know, better than

¹ Comp. *The Targums on the Pentateuch*, 1865, Etheridge, Genesis p. 191, n. "Abram, being brought before Nimrod, was required by the tyrant to worship the fire. 'Great king,' said the father of the faithful, 'would it not be better to worship water? It is mightier than fire, having the power to quench it.' 'Worship the water then,' said Nimrod. ABRAM. 'Methinks it would be more reasonable to worship the clouds, since they carry the waters, and pour them down on the earth.' NIMROD. 'Well, then, worship the clouds, which, by thy own confession, have so great power.' ABRAM. 'Nay, if power is to be the object of worship, the preference should be given to the wind, which by its greater force drives the clouds before it.' NIMROD. 'I see we shall never have done with this babbler. Worship the wind, then, and we will forgive thy former profaneness.' ABRAM. 'Be not angry, great king: I cannot worship the fire, nor the water, nor the clouds, nor the wind, nor any of the things that thou callest gods. The power they possess is derived from a Being who has all power and mercy and love: the Creator of Heaven and Earth, Him only will I worship.' 'Then,' said the king, 'since thou hast refused to adore the fire, thou shalt know for thyself its mighty force.' So Abram was thrown into a fiery furnace, but God delivered him from its flames." *Bereshith Rabba*.

The Targum of Jonathan on Gen. xi. 28 says that Haran, Abraham's brother, reserved his judgment, as follows: "And it was when Nimrod had cast Abram into the furnace of fire because he would not worship his idol—and (?but) the fire had no power to burn him—that Haran's heart became doubtful, saying, If Nimrod overcome, I will be on his side: but if Abram overcome, I will be on his side." Perhaps "and the fire...him" should be read with "*but*," parenthetically: "because he would not worship his idol—*but* [as it turned out] the fire had no power to burn him—that...." In any case, "fire fell from the high heaven and consumed" Haran.

TO THE READER:

we do, how divine a thing human goodness may be; and they may lift us up to a vantage ground, from whence we may descry something more of it than we have been able to infer from our own experience or study. But still—it must be repeated—neither poet, nor prophet, nor evangelist, nor apostle, can relieve us from the necessity of “ministering to ourselves.” If we are unbelievers in the incarnate Goodness, may not the fault be that we have not trained ourselves to recognise ordinary human goodness? We have not been fond enough of it to look about for it. Perhaps we have hardly been ready even to welcome it when obvious. So far from training our eyes to see it, we may have almost (so to speak) untrained them. Yet we call ourselves, perhaps, “good judges of human nature.” We say (Jn ix. 41) “*We see*,” and do not see. What marvel if we gaze at the Cross of Christ in vain? What Christ said to the Pharisees is only too true for us—“Your sin remaineth.”

For indeed, reading the book of life in this purblind fashion, how can we hope to read rightly the written book that tells about Him? Literalising, materialising, and formalising everything, how can we comprehend—how can we even faintly apprehend—what Christ taught about “babes and sucklings?” We have never understood in our hearts the true greatness of His “little ones,” who are so great that the least of them is in some sense greater than the greatest of the prophets. We confuse man’s highest attribute, the “authority” given to the Son of man “upon earth to forgive sins,” with the remission of penalty, or with a formal “*absolvo te*.” The consequence is that Christ, as the human-hearted Son of man, does not “dwell in our hearts through faith.” Intellectually we may possess Him as part of the Scheme of Salvation. But spiritually and in our heart of hearts, we do not feel that “*the love of Christ constraineth us*.”

These words of St Paul are placed on the title-page of *Silanus the Christian* as the motto of the work. The im-

mediate object of *Apologia* and the *Notes* is to defend and explain *Silanus*—the former dealing with the subject generally, the latter in detail. But the ultimate object of *Apologia* as a whole is the same as that of *Silanus*—not to write an attractive historical romance, still less to write an accurate antiquarian romance, or to attempt the impossible task of reproducing the atmosphere of the second century, but to grapple earnestly and honestly¹ with the most formidable difficulties that beset Christian belief in the twentieth century, and to shew how much a twentieth-century man may necessarily doubt or even utterly disbelieve, and yet be drawn, with St Paul, to the foot of the Cross, by the “constraining love of Christ¹.”

8. Part VIII, *The Fourfold Gospel* (Par. 3000 foll.) is not yet published (though completed—or rather, completed as the author thought at the time—in 1904). Its publication was delayed in order to obtain fresh light from the *Johannine Vocabulary* and the *Johannine Grammar*, which were severally published in 1905 and 1906.

As regards verbal criticism, *The Fourfold Gospel* will bring additional evidence to shew that all the gospels, even the fourth sometimes, have been affected by translation from Semitic sources (not so often Hebrew as I once thought, but

¹ One or two of the critics of *Silanus* have said, in effect—quite truly, but as though they were kindly unwilling to say it—“The reader cannot help feeling that the atmosphere, though formally that of the second century, is in reality that of the nineteenth.” For me, there is no sting in that criticism, except that it does not go far enough. I earnestly hope that the “atmosphere” is not “of the nineteenth” but of the “*twentieth* century.” Had I been attempting to suggest “the atmosphere of the second century” I should have written in the style of *Philochristus* or *Onesimus*, not (see *Silanus* p. 12) “in modern English.” Another review, with much more insight into the meaning and purpose of *Silanus*, says with perfect justice, that the book “avoids all attempts at local colour,” that “the whole interest of the story is intellectual and spiritual,” and that it “is solely intended to teach.”

sometimes Hebrew as well as Aramaic). It will afford further proof that, in many parts of the Triple Tradition, where Luke deviates from Mark, or omits what is in Mark, John intervenes to support and explain Mark, though never in Mark's words. More instances will also be given of John's allusions to the Synoptists, Philo, Epictetus, and to contemporary Jewish tradition.

As regards method, *The Fourfold Gospel* will try to shew not only how, but also why, John differed from Matthew, in abstaining from accounts of the fulfilment of lengthy prophecies; from Luke, in abstaining from what may be called evidential narrative in historical style; from Mark, in giving much more space to Christ's utterances as compared with His acts; and from all the Synoptists, in making no attempt to give Christ's words in such forms and phrases as approximate verbally to the original utterances. Together with the reasons for these great differences of language, and in fundamental connexion with these differences, an attempt will be made to explain a special Johannine characteristic pointed out in *Johannine Vocabulary* (1704, 1713) the abundant use of "I."

It will be maintained that the Fourth Gospel stands to the Three somewhat in the relation of Deuteronomy to Leviticus and to the more legal parts of Exodus and Numbers. Deuteronomy is a poetic recast of the Law and History of Israel in the Wilderness. The Fourth Gospel is a *Deuterevangelia*, a poetic recast of the Gospel and History of the New Israel. It describes the Christian Genesis, the Exodus of the Church, the New Law, and the Numbering of the New Congregation.

The foundation of this Deuterevangelia is personal. So is that of Deuteronomy, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*" But the Personality in the Law is the I AM in heaven. The Personality in the Gospel is the I AM on earth; who not only says "*Thou shalt love*" but also brings love into

A SUMMARY

the hearts of His disciples—a love new in fulness but old in kind, human, as from the Son of Man, so clear, so touching, that all the sons of men can understand it. Christ says, in effect, “You know what I mean. You know it by your experience of me. There has passed into your hearts what I had in my heart. Love one another with *that*. Love one another with ‘*the love with which I have loved you.*’”

The first question asked by the first two disciples of Christ is personal, “Rabbi, where abidest thou?” The answer is personal, “Come and ye shall see.” Nothing about heaven, so far. Again, the last word of Christ is personal. It is uttered to the repentant and forgiven Peter, “Follow thou me.” Whither? It is not said. What does it matter whither? Place is of no importance. The thing is to “follow” the Person. Nothing about heaven still. And in the same tone is what precedes. “What shall this man do?” asks Peter about the beloved disciple. The answer is, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” This is a new paradox. We said just now that it was necessary to “follow.” But not even “following” the Person is necessary, if only a disciple “tarries” according to the Person’s “will.” Place, time, even action, it would seem, are all nothing, provided that the disciple—whether here or there, whether now or then, whether active or passive, whether following or tarrying—is always in the spirit of the Person, or “in” the Person, or (which is the same thing) provided that the Person is “in” him.

Accepting this strongly personal view, we shall assuredly find nothing egotistic in the Johannine use of “I.” For the pronoun in John does not mean, as it does in Matthew, “The *Law* says this but *I* say that.” It will be shewn to mean—as also “Son of Man” means, even in the Fourth Gospel—what might be described (though inadequately) as self-abnegation:—“I, Son of Man, who have no existence apart from humanity,” and again, “I, the Son, who have no exist-

ence apart from the Father," "I, who have no life except in doing the Father's will for my brethren," "I, who, by the very law of my being, am the servant of servants, and ready to pour out my blood for my fellow-men." If "authority" follows on this intense self-abasement, that is because it is a necessary sequel, not because the Son "counts it a prize." He cannot help being a "judge," because the Father has chosen Him as being most sympathetic with those whom He must judge, (Jn v. 26) "As the Father hath life in himself, so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself. And he gave him authority to execute judgment *because he is the Son of man.*"

It is commonly asserted that the Fourth Gospel differs from the Synoptists in representing Christ, not as the Son of Man but as God. Much more truly might it be said that John intervenes to explain the former title because bewildered Christians were asking (Jn xii. 34) "Who is this Son of Man?"

Notice how the evangelist—when he has begun his gospel by asserting the eternal pre-existence of the Logos ("In the beginning was the Logos")—does not go on to say, as a Tritheist might do, "and the Logos was [a] God." No, he places first the statement "The Logos was *with* (πρός 2363-6) God."

And as that is his primary thought about the Logos in heaven, so his primary thought about the Incarnate Logos on earth is that He "*was with* (πρός) *man*" together with the thought that He "*was Man with God.*" This implies—what is expressed towards the close of the gospel in Christ's last prayer—that the Man is "*in*" God, at the same time that God is "*in*" the Man, making human nature one with the divine. To illustrate this view of the relation between the Three Gospels and the Fourth, is contemplated by the author as one of the principal objects of *The Fourfold Gospel*.

A SUMMARY

So far, our discussions have mainly dealt not with the doctrine of Christ, but with the various aspects of it presented by the evangelists. We have been considering how Mark may have confused and "conflated"; Matthew may have defied chronology in his habitual "grouping"; Luke may have adapted facts to conjectures in attempting to return to chronology; how Mark Matthew and Luke may have been misled into materialistic interpretations of allegory or metaphor; and how John may have idealised history into typical poetry in attempting to return from materialistic literalism to spiritual reality.

To a much more important and difficult question little attention may seem to have been given—I mean, what was the actual doctrine of Christ. The reason was that the time did not seem ripe for it. That question cannot be discussed except on the basis of a vast foundation of evidence, verbal, historical—historical on a small scale (dealing with the history of the first two centuries), historical on a larger scale (dealing with the history of the nineteen Christian centuries), historical on the largest scale (dealing with anthropology, the making of Man from the beginning, and including some foreshadowing of future developments).

This investigation is not forgotten. It is only deferred. The author hopes to attempt some part of it systematically in *The Fourfold Gospel*. Meantime he ventures to express his belief that the fullest investigation of facts will result in the most triumphant conclusion, demonstrating not only the spiritual originality of the Founder of our faith, but also His intuition into truths on which anthropology is based and on the recognition of which alone the true development of Man can be expected, and shewing that many of the charges justly brought against forms of Christianity do not hold good against Christ.

For example, it is commonly alleged against the Christian religion—and this, by men of profound learning, candour, and

good sense—that in some fatal characteristics it resembles the religion of the Buddha. Christianity, like Buddhism, is said to strike at the root not merely of civil society but of human existence, by its glorification of poverty and celibacy.

I believe it will be found that on these two points (as on others) while some forms of the Christian religion stand condemned, Christ Himself stands acquitted. He regarded marriage as ordained by God “from the beginning,” and wealth as a gift from God. Both were to be rightly used, and sometimes—in rare instances—rightly refrained from.

The great object was to bring Israel back to God—Israel and “the nations” in union, as the later Isaiah contemplated them—not to its old reformed condition under Josiah, nor to its royal prosperity under David, nor to its fervid recognition of a freshly given Law in any period real or imaginary, nor to its rejoicing in the Covenant of the Flesh under Abraham, nor to its irrecoverable ignorance of good and evil in Adam, but to Man in the beginning of beginnings, as Man existed in the divine Mind where Man was one with God, and as Man is to be in the end of ends when God’s “Kingdom” will have “come.”

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Part VI

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